CAIE History 9489
AS European Option Topical Booklet

For Examination in 2025

Paper 2

Topic 1: France, 1774–1814

General Markscheme

Part (a)	Generic Levels of Response:	Mark
Level 4	**Connects factors to reach a reasoned conclusion** ● Answers are well focused and explain a range of factors supported by relevant information. ● Answers demonstrate a clear understanding of the connections between causes. ● Answers reach a supported conclusion.	**9-10**
Level 3	**Explains factor(s)** ● Answers demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the demands of the question. ● Answers include explained factor(s) supported by relevant information.	**6-8**
Level 2	**Describes factor(s)** Answers show some knowledge and understanding of the demands of ● the question. (They address causation.) ● Answers are may be entirely descriptive in approach with description of ● factor(s).	**3-5**
Level 1	**Describes the topic/issue** ● Answers contain some relevant material about the topic but are descriptive in nature, making no reference to causation.	**1-2**
Level 0	**No creditable content.**	**0**

Part (a)	Generic Levels of Response:	Mark
Level 5	**Responses which develop a sustained judgement** ● Answers are well focused and closely argued. (Answers show a maintained and complete understanding of the question.) ● Answers are supported by precisely selected evidence. ● Answers lead to a relevant conclusion/judgement which is developed and supported.	
Level 4	**Responses which develop a balanced argument** ● Answers show explicit understanding of the demands of the question. ● Answers develop a balanced argument supported by a good range of appropriately selected evidence. ● Answers may begin to form a judgement in response to the question. (At this level the judgement may be partial or not fully supported.)	**9-10**
Level 3	**Responses which begin to develop assessment** ● Answers show a developed understanding of the demands of the question. ● Answers provide some assessment, supported by relevant and appropriately selected evidence. However, these answers are likely to lack depth of evidence and/or balance.	**6-8**
Level 2	**Responses which show some understanding of the question** ● Answers show some understanding of the focus of the question. ● They are either entirely descriptive with few explicit links to the question or they may contain some explicit comment with relevant but limited support.	**3-5**
Level 1	**Descriptive or partial responses** ● Answers contain descriptive material about the topic which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question. ● Alternatively, there may be some explicit comment on the question which lacks support ● Answers may be fragmentary and disjointed.	**1-2**
Level 0	**No creditable content.**	**0**

Questions

Question 1
9489 May/June 2024 Paper 21

(a) Explain why Napoleon became emperor in 1804 [10]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon's military success brought glory and prestige; imperial title avoided "king." ● Confirmed as Consul for Life in 1802 by plebiscite, with right to nominate successor. ● Adopted royal court style in 1803, formalizing ceremonies, etiquette, and dress. ● Failed assassination plots (Cadoudal/Pichegru, 1803–04) raised fears about instability. ● Bourbon Pretender's threat to restore seized properties strengthened support for Napoleon. ● Senate declared Napoleon Emperor in May 1804; November plebiscite confirmed hereditary rule.
My essay plan

(b) 'Taxes caused the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Taxes were central to the revolution due to inefficiency, corruption, and unfair exemptions in the Ancien Régime system. ● France's inability to collect enough taxes led to bankruptcy and the summoning of the Estates General, triggering the revolution. ● Louis XVI and monarchists' reluctance to reform taxation fueled the events of 1789. ● Louis XVI's inadequacy, e.g., barring the National Assembly on June 20, led to the Tennis Court Oath demanding a constitution. ● His mixed actions—recognizing the Assembly on June 27 while mobilizing troops—fueled fears of a royal coup, sparking the Bastille's storming. ● Hunger and economic issues from bad harvests and rising bread prices drove widespread unrest, e.g., the Women's March on Versailles in October 1789. ● Enlightenment ideas provided a framework for reform, with the American Revolutionary War demonstrating practical implementation.
My essay plan

Question 2
9489 May/June 2024 Paper 22

(a) Explain why Turgot's policies faced opposition. [10]

Markscheme Points
● First Minister of State and Controller-General of Finances to Louis XVI (August 1774 – May 1776). ● Proposed redistributing the tax burden to include the wealthiest citizens, facing opposition from the first and second estates. ● Advocated Physiocracy (Law of Nature), promoting free trade, labour, and market pricing; opposed by conservative elites like grain speculators. ● Attempted to remove local grain tolls to liberalize the economy but triggered the 1774 Flour War due to a bad harvest and rising prices. ● Introduced the controversial 'Six Edicts' in 1776, including: ○ Abolition of the corvée, replaced with a property tax payable by all, which nobles opposed as a threat to their privileges. ○ Abolishing trade guilds, opposed by guild masters fearing economic liberty would harm their livelihoods. ● Used lits de justice and lettres de cachet to enforce policies, worsening opposition due to perceived high-handedness.
My essay plan

(b) 'By avoiding radical policies, the Directory was able to survive for four years.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● The Directory's conservative stance appealed to those opposing further radicalization and the excesses of the Terror. ● Dislike for De-Christianization campaigns and violence made the Directory's moderation more acceptable. ● By 1799, many churches had reopened, and priests were reinstated, enhancing the Directory's middle-ground appeal. ● Weak and divided opposition from Jacobins and Royalists reduced threats to the Directory's survival. ● Napoleon's military victories in Italy brought glory and bolstered the Directory's popularity. ● The Directory maintained revolutionary ideals, e.g., annual elections, secret ballot, broad electorate, and extensive franchise under the 1795 constitution. ● The Directory's fall in 1799 was partly due to losing military support.
My essay plan

Question 3
9489 May/June 2024 Paper 23

(a) Explain why the storming of the Bastille happened. [10]

Markscheme Points
● Failings of Louis XVI created mistrust; e.g., invalidating National Assembly decisions on June 23, then reversing on June 27. ● Fear arose as additional troops, including Swiss and German mercenaries, were stationed near Paris by early July. ● Necker's dismissal on July 11 signaled a potential conservative coup by the royal government. ● Parisians armed themselves for defense, acquiring muskets but needing gunpowder stored at the Bastille. ● Initial negotiations at the Bastille turned violent, leading to its fall by 5:30 pm on July 14. ● Symbolically, the Bastille represented royal absolutism, and its storming marked a revolutionary assault on this system.
My essay plan

(b) 'Napoleon was able to maintain his power by using propaganda.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon used propaganda to portray himself as the heir to the Revolution, promoting ideas like 'a career open to the talents.' ● He controlled his image through impressive portraits (e.g., his coronation) and monuments like the Arc de Triomphe. ● Censorship and control of the press ensured his narrative dominated, emphasizing military victories while downplaying failures. ● The constitution of 1799 granted Napoleon supreme authority as First Consul, overshadowing the other Consuls. ● His power grew further in 1800 with the Consulship for life and in 1804 as Emperor, securing hereditary rule. ● Reforms like the Concordat and Civil Code provided stability, appealing to the middle class and strengthening his rule. ● Manipulated plebiscites, lack of viable alternatives (e.g., weak Bourbon Pretender), and repressive measures (e.g., secret police) ensured his control.
My essay plan

Question 4
9489 Feb/March 2024 Paper 22

(a) Explain why Louis XVI recalled the Parlements at the start of his reign in 1774. [10]

Markscheme Points
● In 1771, Maupeou, Louis XV's Chancellor, took action against Parlementaire resistance by stripping judges of their powers and exiling resisting Parlements. ● Louis XV's death removed the strained relations between the Crown and the Parlements. ● Louis XVI, eager to make his mark as a young king, chose to recall the Parlements as a symbol of a new era. ● The recall was popular as many saw the removal of the Parlements as ministerial despotism, contrary to traditional French governance. ● Failing to recall the Parlements could have diminished the initial popular acclaim Louis XVI received upon his coronation
My essay plan

(b) To what extent did internal divisions cause the counter-revolutionaries to fail in the period from 1790 to 1795? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Poor leadership from the Louises and no strong leader led to division among counterrevolutionaries. ● Disagreements over the role of the Church, constitutionalism, and foreign support weakened their unity. ● They were out of touch with public opinion, especially regarding the gains of 1789–91. ● There was no coordinated action, and Louis XVI's flight to Varennes showed his rejection of aristocratic control. ● Popular support for the revolution's gains made the restoration of the Ancien Régime unlikely. ● Counterrevolutionaries' support for the war against France made them appear as traitors. ● Military victories by the Republic, especially by generals like Hoche, weakened the counterrevolutionaries. ● Regional divisions, such as Brittany's refusal to help other areas, further fragmented their efforts. ● Lack of strong foreign support, especially from Austria and Britain's self-interest, contributed to their failure
My essay plan

Question 5
9489 Oct/Nov 2022 Paper 21

(a) Explain why Napoleon's domestic policies were popular. [10]

Markscheme Points
● The Concordat with the Catholic Church was popular, restoring State-Church relations and appealing to the Catholic majority, who had been disturbed by previous revolutionary changes like the Cult of the Supreme Being. ● Napoleon's economic reforms provided a sense of stability, improving France's finances after the turmoil since 1789. ● The Concordat was a compromise, recognizing the Revolution and ensuring the Church would not recover lost lands. The clergy were made state employees, reinforcing state control, which appealed to revolutionaries. ● The Civil Code streamlined the legal system, establishing uniform laws and equality before the law, making the law more accessible to all, not just the privileged. ● Reforms in education, public works, and the principle of 'career open to the talents' further demonstrated Napoleon's appeal to broader society.
Examiner Report
Successful responses were characterised by both a clear knowledge of the various aspects of Napoleon's domestic policies and a good understanding of why they appealed to many in France. These responses could have been improved by showing the connection between the factors explained. Less successful responses described Napoleon's domestic policies while weaker responses focused on his military successes
My essay plan

(b) 'War caused the French monarchy to fall in 1792.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
• France had been at war since April 1792, suffering defeats and mass desertions, including the murder of General Dillon. • Over 50% of army officers had fled since 1789, leading to a lack of trained leadership. • New volunteers (Blues) were poorly armed and untrained, causing tensions with old regulars (Whites). • War caused social and economic disruption, increasing fears of traitors and counterrevolutionaries in Paris. • The monarchy became the scapegoat, with many believing its removal would improve the war effort. • Louis XVI's failed escape in June 1791 and his vetoes led many to view him as unsupportive of the Revolution. • The Brunswick Manifesto in July 1792 deepened distrust, threatening consequences if the king was harmed. • Economic problems, such as the poor 1792 harvest and rising grain prices, added to the volatile situation. • By summer 1792, calls for abolishing the monarchy became widespread.
Examiner Report
Good answers grasped the question's timeframe and were able to produce high quality analysis based on the deployment of appropriate factual evidence to aid the development of fully focused and balanced arguments. This meant war was assessed against a range of influences (e.g. Louis XVI's lukewarm support for the changes since 1789/the flight and capture of the royal family in June 1791/the growing radicalism of the revolution/the impact of the poor harvest of 1792). Other responses focused solely on the role of war and, as a result, lacked balance. Less successful answers did not grasp the timeframe and wrote at length about the background to the events of 1789 with no link being established to 1792 or they described events which followed 1792 (The Terror).
My essay plan

Question 6
9489 Oct/Nov 2022 Paper 22

a) Explain why the insurrection of 10 August 1792 happened. [10]

Markscheme Points
• Louis XVI's failed escape in June 1791 weakened monarchy support, threatening Revolution gains. • War in April 1792 fueled fears of traitors; the army's reliance on urban volunteers increased sans culottes' demands for power. • Economic difficulties, such as poor harvests and rising grain prices, led to calls for price controls. • The Brunswick Manifesto in July 1792 fueled fears with threats of retribution against Paris. • Growing calls for the king's dethronement led to the Legislative Assembly's indecision on 9 August. • On 10 August, the tocsin sounded, marking the start of the insurrection and power seizure.
Examiner Report
Candidates were often able to provide at least two explanations for this questiopn. The most common responses were those that dealt with the perceived betrayal of the King through the Flight to Varennes, or through the threat posed by the Brunswick Manifesto. Stronger answers were also able to explain the particular economic situation of 1792, while weaker responses offered more general answers that were limited to vague statements about poverty. The strongest responses linked these factors to the rise of republicanism and were able to relate it to the role of the sans culottes, thereby producing a top level answer. There were a significant number of responses that clearly did not know what the insurrection was, and these answers either gave very generalised responses about issues that were relevant to the entire period, or wrote about an incorrect event, normally the storming of the Bastille, or the September Massacres
My essay plan

(b) 'The Concordat of 1801 was Napoleon's greatest domestic achievement.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● The Concordat restored Church influence, addressing Catholic concerns. ● Catholicism was recognized as the dominant religion but without full pre-1789 privileges. ● Supporters kept Church lands, while revolutionaries valued limited Church power. ● The Concordat gained broad support for Napoleon's regime. ● Economic stability came through the Bank of France (1800) and new coinage (1803). ● The Civil Code ensured legal equality but reduced women's rights. ● These policies portrayed Napoleon as ruling for the benefit of all.
Examiner Report
This question was often answered very well, with candidates attempting a balanced answer. Some excellent responses were seen that were confident in their understanding of the Concordat, and the stability it brought to France, as well as the popularity for Napoleon. This was often supported with details of earlier uprising such as in the Vendee. On the other side of the argument candidates were able to show how the Napoleonic Code, and the economic and educational reforms also brought benefits to France in terms of stability, prosperity and social progress. Weaker responses often suggested that the Napoleonic Code encompassed the whole raft of economic and social reform rather than being a codification of the different legal systems found in France at that time. Many answers were able to provide a reasoned account to the successes and failings of Napoleon's domestic reforms and only a few strayed into the issue of military achievements which were not part of this question.
My essay plan

Question 7
9489 Oct/Nov 2022 Paper 23

(a) Explain why Napoleon's coup of 1799 against the Directory was successful. [10]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon's success as a general gave him strong support from the army and people, making the coup a viable option. ● His return from Egypt was well-timed, preventing damage to his reputation. ● Disillusionment with the Directory, due to manipulations and ineffective governance, fueled support for change. ● Lucien Napoleon, as President of the Five Hundred, helped secure acceptance of the coup. ● The coup was well-planned, with conspirators gaining deputy support and ensuring the smooth relocation of the Councils to St. Cloud.
Examiner Report
This question was well answered by most candidates. Many were normally able to provide at least two explanations – most commonly the unpopularity of the Directory and the popularity of Napoleon. Better responses also included commentary on the role of other key individuals such as Lucien Bonaparte and Sieyes. Many were also able to provide links by examining the relative popularity and unpopularity of Napoleon and the Directory. However, some weaker answers described the entire history of the French Revolution, without really engaging effectively with the question
My essay plan

(b) How far do you agree that the failure of the Estates General was caused by Louis XVI? [20]

Markscheme Points
• Louis XVI's failure to lead the Estates General and lack of input in the cahiers caused disillusionment. • The voting bias against the Third Estate led to an impasse and the formation of the National Assembly. • Louis XVI's attempts to restore order, like closing their meeting hall, led to the Tennis Court Oath. • The Estates General's outdated procedures and the unrealistic expectations from the cahiers made it an ineffective solution.
Examiner Report
Strong responses were able to show the issues caused/not resolved by Louis, with the most common being the problems with the voting system, or his reluctance to accept change/deal with the cahiers. On the other side some good arguments were seen linking the Enlightenment to the determination of the third estate to press for change, leading to the establishment of the National Assembly. Other arguments seen were that it was the nature of the Ancien Regime, or that it was the serious nature of the problems facing France that caused it to fail. Some answers also used the issues with the voting system as an alternative reason, which was valid. Weaker responses understood many of the general concepts, but were either descriptive, or failed to provide support for the arguments.
My essay plan

Question 8
9489 May/June 2022 Paper 21

(a) Explain why Louis XVI issued the edict of 24 January 1789, summoning the Estates General. [10]

Markscheme Points
• The king and ministers failed to solve key issues, especially financial problems. • Other institutions like the Paris Parlement and Assembly of Notables also failed to provide solutions. • Economic distress led to social unrest, such as the Day of Tiles in Grenoble (1788). • The inability to resolve issues caused a crisis of confidence in the French government's financial stability. • The Estates General was seen as a way to introduce new taxes and reforms to address the system's problems.
Examiner Report
Strong responses included several reasons for the calling of the Estates General (e.g. financial problems facing France; the failure of the Parlements and the Assembly of Notables to provide solutions; growing social unrest occasioned by poor harvests; and rising living costs). These responses could have been improved by showing the connection between the factors. Less successful responses described the composition of the Estates General and/or the events of the summer of 1789 rather than addressing causation.
My essay plan

(b) To what extent was the Directory a failure? [20]

Markscheme Points
• Napoleon's coup in 1799 showed the Directory's loss of support and failure. • Previous coups and election manipulation weakened its reputation. • Economic issues, like bankruptcy in 1797, further damaged its stability. • The Directory struggled to satisfy both radicals and conservatives. • It ended the Terror and provided some stability with democratic institutions. • The 1795 constitution created a broad electorate. • France saw more peace and stability than since 1789. • Napoleon's military success in Italy boosted his popularity.
Examiner Report
The most successful responses provided a balanced account of the Directory's actions and reached a reasoned judgement about the extent of its failure. Other responses focused on the issue of failure and the relative ease with which the Directory was overthrown by Napoleon in 1799. Less successful answers made generalised points about economic weakness, high taxation and/or confused events from earlier governments with those of the Directory.
My essay plan

Question 9
9489 May/June 2022 Paper 22

(a) Explain why the September Massacres of 1792 happened. [10]

Markscheme Points
● After August 10, 1792, power shifted to the radical Paris Commune. ● The Commune sought revenge on royalists, priests, and Lafayette. ● Prussia's invasion and Longwy's fall fueled paranoia about traitors. ● Danton's volunteer call faced fears of counter-revolutionary uprisings. ● Frustration with slow tribunals led to Marat's call for massacres. ● The Sans Culottes stormed the Tuileries, arresting the royal family. ● Panic over Prussia's advance triggered the September Massacres, killing 1,400 prisoners.
Examiner Report
The strongest responses were characterised by an understanding of who was massacred in September 1792. Responses which showed this awareness were able to explain why the massacres took place in terms of both internal conflicts and external threats. Weaker responses, however, did not demonstrate this level of understanding and wrote more generally about the problems of France in the period for 1789 to 1792. Such descriptions sometimes managed to identify some of the factors that led to this event but were often generalised.
My essay plan

(b) How far was the passing of the August Decrees in 1789 caused by ideas of the Enlightenment? [20]

Markscheme Points
● The abolition of feudalism, noble privileges, and Church tithes reflected Enlightenment ideals, emphasizing reason, equality, and meritocracy. ● Aristocrats like Duc D'Aiguillon, influenced by Enlightenment and experiences in America, supported the changes. ● The August Decrees marked a shift from the Ancien Régime, ending noble dominance and reducing Church influence by halving its income. ● However, the decrees also responded to immediate crises, such as the Great Fear, where attacks on nobles and property spread from Paris to the countryside. ● The National Constituent Assembly sought to restore order, with the Breton Club proposing sweeping reforms to calm the unrest. ● Deputies acted under pressure, likely going further in their proposals than initially planned.
Examiner Report
The strongest responses showed understanding of the content of the August Decree and used this knowledge to construct effective answers. They provided relevant details of the ideas of different writers and the most successful of these then linked these to the measures adopted by the National Assembly in the August Decrees. Many responses showed some understanding of the Enlightenment, though a few candidates did not fully grasp this, writing mainly about the effects of the American Revolution. Some weaker responses showed confusion regarding the chronology of events, and some responses said little about the events that led to the passing of the Decrees. Therefore, these responses lacked balance
My essay plan

Question 10
9489 May/June 2022 Paper 23

(a) Explain why the Assembly of Notables met in 1787. [10]

Markscheme Points
● France's finances were in crisis, with a deficit of 112m livres, nearly half of annual revenue consumed by debt service, and government credit exhausted. ● Efforts to cut court and government expenses could only save around 30% of total costs. ● Increasing revenue required addressing the fiscal privileges of the clergy and nobility, as indirect taxes on goods were insufficient. ● Calonne, Controller-General of Finances since 1783, proposed a new graduated land tax to resolve the issue. ● To gain support, Calonne called an Assembly of Notables, assuming these royal appointees would endorse his plan, enabling further loans.
Examiner Report
Generally, candidates had a sound understanding of the problems that faced France in the 1780s and were able to offer reasonable explanations. The best responses were those that had a clear understanding of what the Council of Notables was and what it might be able to do. Less successful responses were characterised by general explanations of the various problems faced by the government of Louis XVI, and a few confused this Council with the Estates General. The best responses were able to show how factors were linked and included a reasoned judgement of its relative importance
My essay plan

(b) To what extent did Napoleon's domestic policies change France in the period 1799–1814? [20]

Markscheme Points
● The Empire and Civil Code centralized power, replacing Revolutionary sovereignty with autocracy. ● The Civil Code introduced legal equality and reformed France's judicial system. ● The Concordat secured religious tolerance and increased state control over the Church. ● Education expanded, and social mobility was encouraged through "careers open to talent." ● Stability lasted until 1811's bad harvest and conscription issues. ● However, censorship, secret police, and a return to Roman Law's authoritarianism continued from the Ancien Régime. ● Women's rights were curtailed, and agriculture remained stagnant. ● Industrial growth was limited, and the Empire resembled Bourbon absolutism.
Examiner Report
Many candidates had a good knowledge of Napoleon's reforms and were able to write clearly, and in detail about them. However, some weaker answers had difficulty in making the shift into evaluating the extent to which these reforms led to change in France. Stronger answers found different ways of judging change. Some looked back to the Ancien Regime considering progress made since then against the revival of certain features of the former system of royal government. Other responses compared Napoleon's changes with the measures achieved by the revolution seeking to judge between continuity of revolutionary principles against policies that moved away from these. Both these approaches produced valid arguments. However, less effective answers struggled with the idea of continuity and change and often resorted to general points about positive and negative aspects of Napoleon's reforms. The weakest responses wrote in general terms about everything Napoleon did, with no real focus on the question of change
My essay plan

Question 11
9489 Feb/March 2022 Paper 22

(a) Explain why Necker resigned in 1781. [10]

Markscheme Points
● Necker's public balance sheet (Le Compte Rendu au Roi) sparked controversy and weakened his position. ● Conservatives, like Comte de Vergennes, opposed the publication, believing French subjects had no right to know the state of finances. ● Critics argued Necker overestimated revenue and omitted war costs, accusing him of misleading the king and the public. ● Necker was seen as using the report to strengthen his position and gain access to the king's inner circle. ● Louis XVI refused Necker's request to join the council, leading to his resignation
Examiner Report
This was a question that seemed to confuse almost all candidates and saw some of the poorest performances on the paper. Indeed, several candidates who did Question 1 did not even attempt this part of the question. Those who did generally failed to get beyond the lower levels of the mark scheme. The basic problem was that almost no-one really knew why Necker resigned in 1781, and so even the better responses only wrote in general terms about failure to manage finances, the unfairness of the tax system, etc. and unpopularity with the nobility at court. However, these responses failed to relate these as to why he resigned in 1781. Weaker responses also wrote about the calling of the Council of Notables and the Estates General or the poor harvests that came later in the 1780s, which were not relevant to the question
My essay plan

(b) How firmly did Napoleon establish his control over France as First Consul, 1799–1804? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon's power was solidified by the 1799 constitution, with final authority as First Consul. ● After surviving an assassination attempt in 1800, he became Consul for life in 1802. ● He controlled the Tribunate and Legislature, reducing opposition after 1802. ● Napoleon personally influenced the Civil Code's approval. ● Resistance to him included assassination attempts and royalist plots in 1804. ● He used the vendetta law to justify d'Enghieu's execution, showing insecurity. ● Censorship reduced political journals from 73 to 13.
Examiner Report
Most candidates were able to provide a narrative account of some of Napoleon’s measures that were designed to secure his control over France. However, they were generally less successful in being able to show where weaknesses still existed in this control, so most of the responses lacked any substantial degree of balance. Weaker candidates tended to just agree with the statement and then provide a more or less, detailed description of the measures that showed this was the case. Many candidates demonstrated limited chronological awareness of the reforms Napoleon made that fell within the specified period of the first Consulate. Overall performance on this question was generally weak
My essay plan

Question 12
9489 Oct/Nov 2021 Paper 21

(a) Explain why Louis XVI was executed in 1793. [10]

Markscheme Points
• Louis XVI's reluctance to make reforms (e.g., Civil Constitution of the Clergy) portrayed him as an obstacle to progress. • His flight to Varennes in 1791 made him seem to support foreign intervention, marking him as a traitor in the eyes of many. • The flight increased radical influence, with the Jacobins calling for his death. • Events like the Massacre on the Champs de Mars and the Tuileries Palace attack further painted Louis as responsible for the deaths of citizens, fueling calls for his execution. • The discovery of the king's secret correspondence in the Tuileries in 1792 suggested he was involved in counter-revolution, influencing his fate. • Louis XVI was executed on 21 January 1793.
Examiner Report
Most answers were included at least one explanation, usually concentrating on Robespierre's role, the reluctance of Louis to make concessions, and/or the flight to Varennes. Weaker answers included a narrative of events leading to the execution rather than selecting key factors, such as those listed above, to explain Louis fate. The best responses provided clear links between the different pressures of the period.
My essay plan

(b) To what extent was Napoleon's military ability the reason for the ending of the Directory in 1799? [20]

Markscheme Points
• Napoleon's military successes in Italy (1796-1797) and Egypt (1798-1799) built his reputation and popularity, making him a hero upon his return. • The army, disillusioned with the weak government, supported Napoleon's move to overthrow the Directory on 10 November 1799. • Napoleon's actions led to the creation of the Consulate, replacing the Directory with a three-man executive. • However, the Directory failed due to coups, instability, and royalist uprisings, losing support, particularly from Republicans. • The coup of 1799 was initially seen as a minor change, and Lucien Bonaparte's organization played a key role in its success. • Napoleon's timely return from Egypt before his military failures became known helped secure his position.
Examiner Report
There was a wide range of responses to this question. The strongest responses included a balanced comparison of the role of Napoleon against the role of other factors in the fall of the Directory. More modest answers were typically quite generalised in nature and could have been improved with a greater focus on the question. Weaker responses contained little detail or were a narrative of either Napoleon's career or the failures of the Directory. Another notable feature of weaker responses was the inclusion of general statements about Napoleon's use of propaganda, the Napoleonic Code and the Concordat, with a general view that the Directory was 'unpopular' or 'corrupt', but these were often unsupported assertions which needed support in order to be credited. Good responses demonstrated how Napoleon built his popularity at a time when the Directory was struggling, highlighting the fact that Napoleon was often the 'enforcer' of the Directory's authority so that once he turned against them, they were doomed. Good answers also included other factors including the role of Sieyes and of Napoleon's brother Lucien in providing the coordination of action to end the Directory.
My essay plan

Question 13
9489 Oct/Nov 2021 Paper 22

(a) Explain why the National Constituent Assembly introduced the August Decrees. [10]

Markscheme Points
• The Great Fear (July 1789) caused widespread panic in the provinces, with attacks on nobles and destruction of property, even beyond noble estates. • Property-owning members of the Assembly were frightened but lacked the means to restore order by force. • The Breton Club (precursors to the Jacobins) believed that a major reform of the social structure would calm the peasants. • The urgency of the situation led many deputies to take more radical actions than initially planned. • Aristocrats like Duc d'Aiguillon had previously supported liberty, such as backing the American Revolution, which made their support seem idealistic rather than self-serving. • The August Decrees focused on abolishing feudalism and reducing the privileges of the Church.
Examiner Report
A very popular question that produced a range of responses, the majority of which concentrated on the difficulties facing France in the period leading up to the August Decrees. The strongest responses focused specifically on the issues that were dealt with in the Decrees – principally the problems that stemmed for the continuing unfairness that resulted from the impositions of the feudal system. The weakest responses often wrote about the problems of the Ancien Regime without fully addressing the issue of the August Decrees. Many responses were not fully aware of what the August decrees aimed to address and provided a general account about solving various problems that existed in 1789. Few responses focused on the immediate events leading to the August Decrees such as the storming of the Bastille or the ‘Great Fear’.
My essay plan

(b) 'The ideas of the Revolution were ignored by the Directory.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? [20]

Markscheme Points
● The Constitution of 1795 gave the Directory emergency powers, curbing freedoms, like press and association, similar to the Ancien Régime. ● The Directory's coups undermined its authority, focusing on political survival instead of revolutionary goals. ● The 1799 coup was seen as a cosmetic change; Consuls replaced Directors. ● In 1797, the Directory annulled elections and excluded deputies, showing anti-democratic actions. ● The suppression of political parties and inexperienced replacements moved away from revolutionary principles. ● The Directory maintained revolutionary achievements like the secret ballot and broader franchise. ● Economic prosperity and security improved under the Directory, aligning with revolutionary goals. ● The pressremained free, and democratic institutions worked, supporting revolutionary values
Examiner Report
Good responses to this question recognised the implicit argument within this statement and structured their responses accordingly. They provided a clear explanation of the policies and practices of the Directory that followed revolutionary ideas and then examined factors that conflicted with them. Often the policies were evaluated against the underlying principles of liberty, equality and fraternity – for example, in challenging the statement reference was made to the idea of annual elections, a five-man Directory which avoided a single autocratic ruler, the division of powers within the government, etc. In supporting the hypothesis reference was often made to the suppression of election results the Directory did not like and the use of the army to quell protests. There were some well-constructed responses around these arguments which scored well. The strongest responses referred back to specific objectives as enshrined in the Declaration the Rights of Men and Citizens, the August Decrees and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Weaker responses tended to provide a basic account of the way the Directors ruled and/or what they failed to do, with little or no consideration of what the original objectives of the Revolution might have been
My essay plan

Question 15
9489 Oct/Nov 2021 Paper 23

(a) Explain why France experienced the 'Reign of Terror' between 1792 and 1794. [10]

Markscheme Points
● War against Austria in 1792 caused fear of invasion and potential revolution's collapse. ● Anti-Jacobin violence and counter-revolutionary movements in cities like Lyon and Toulon. ● Radical measures were needed to prevent the country's collapse. ● Sans culottes demanded action from the Committee of Public Safety to protect the Revolution. ● Jacobins used the situation to consolidate power, labeling opponents as threats. ● Robespierre believed in the 'General Will,' protecting the Republic and its ideals. ● Opposition to the ideal needed to be suppressed to preserve the Republic of Virtue.
Examiner Report
This was a popular question and was generally well answered. Many candidates demonstrated some knowledge of what the Reign of Terror involved and most explained at least one reason for it. The most common responses were linked to the role of Robespierre, or the increasing radicalisation of the Jacobins, which often went further to explain the fear of counterrevolutionary activities. Not many candidates attempted to link factors, but knowledge was used well to produce a good quality of answer. Some responses focused mainly on the execution of the king and its immediate follow up in Paris rather than the wider occurrence of mass executions. Weaker responses gave a description of events leading up to the Reign of Terror rather than explaining the actual phenomenon and why it happened.
My essay plan

(b) To what extent did the ideas of the Enlightenment cause the outbreak of the Revolution in 1789? [20]

Markscheme Points
● The Enlightenment emphasized reason over tradition, challenging absolute monarchy and the Catholic Church. ● The Third Estate demanded voting by head, influenced by Enlightenment ideas. ● The August Decrees sought to rationalize the political system, ending feudal privileges. ● Enlightenment ideas of liberty and consent influenced the National Assembly and Tennis Court Oath. ● The success of the American Revolution inspired Frenchmen like Lafayette and d'Aigullion. ● However, the Ancien Regime's inefficient tax system and rising debt worsened the financial crisis. ● Poor harvests and economic distress heightened social unrest and political instability. ● Louis XVI's mishandling of the crisis led to the Tennis Court Oath and the creation of a constitution. ● The attack on the Bastille and the Great Fear were responses to perceived royal threat. ● The August Decrees aimed to placate peasants by abolishing feudalism.
Examiner Report
Many candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the role of the Enlightenment, often based on the idea of changing beliefs about absolute monarchy and demands for more inclusion in government. All responses presented a much stronger argument for the role of other factors including the severe financial difficulties partly stemming from past overcommitments (e.g. the American War of Independence, etc.). Most candidates also offered some sort of reasoned argument. Such responses could have been improved with the inclusion of greater balance in their arguments and analysis. Weaker responses were less secure in their knowledge of the role of the Enlightenment and wrote only in general terms about the ideas of key philosophers.
My essay plan

Question 16
9489 May/June 2021 Paper 21

(a) Explain why the Estates General was not able to deal with the issues France faced. [10]

Markscheme Points
● Uncertainty about procedure due to the long gap since the last meeting in 1614. ● Disagreements over voting and decision-making in the Estates General. ● Cahiers raised unrealistic expectations for a fundamental overhaul of France. ● Contradictory solutions in the cahiers due to lack of royal direction. ● Frustration with Louis XVI's refusal to change the voting system led to the National Assembly's formation. ● National Assembly claimed the right to decide on taxation, challenging the king's authority. ● Fear of royal troops in Paris sparked disorder, such as the storming of the Bastille. ● The formation of the National Constituent Assembly signaled the need for new institutions.
Examiner Report
Most candidates were able to display sound knowledge of the composition of the Estates General and the negative impact which this had on its ability to make agreed decisions. The strongest responses went beyond these general points, outlining specific problems which confronted France and explaining why the Estates General was unable to find practical solutions to them. Weaker responses often provided a list of problems that led to the French Revolution, without linking this information to the specific focus of the question.
My essay plan

(b) How far did Napoleon as First Consul, 1799–1804, maintain the principles of the Revolution? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon was popular due to military successes, defending the Revolution. ● He used plebiscites for popular consent, supporting revolutionary ideas. ● The Civil Code enshrined equality before the law, a key revolutionary principle. ● The Concordat of 1801 upheld religious freedom, in line with revolutionary ideals. ● His policies on local administration and the fiscal system continued Revolutionary work. ● Elections were limited, with candidates only from the notables, reducing democracy. ● The Civil Code reinforced male authority, undermining women's rights gained during the Revolution. ● The Concordat was seen as a betrayal by many revolutionaries, restoring the Catholic Church's influence. ● The Civil Code centralized power, increasing Napoleon's personal control.
Examiner Report
Good responses were able to produce high-quality analysis based on the deployment of appropriate factual evidence to aid the development of fully focused and balanced arguments. Highly effective responses were able to provide a brief outline of revolutionary principles to assess Napoleon's actions against. Less well-focused responses provided a narrative of Napoleon's action and/or an account of his military campaigns.
My essay plan

Question 17
9489 May/June 2021 Paper 22

(a) Explain why the Directory was overthrown in 1799. [10]

Markscheme Points
● The Directory failed to solve France's political, social, and economic issues, a legacy of the Revolution. ● War, coups, and counterrevolutionary activities eroded the Directory's authority. ● Property owners feared a Jacobin revival or monarchical restoration, threatening their new acquisitions. ● Napoleon's success as a general created popular appeal, making him a viable alternative. ● Napoleon's timely return from Egypt, before news of setbacks spread, helped his cause. ● Lucien's efforts to rally support for the coup contributed to the Directory's overthrow in 1799
Examiner Report
A popular question which was generally well answered. There were many good answers that identified a number of the problems that faced the Directory including the challenge of factions such as the Jacobins and Royalists, the continuation of the war, economic difficulties and the structure and working of the government. Many candidates were also aware of the significant role played by Napoleon and the army in the fall of the Directory. Good answers handled a range of these factors well, explaining each one and, in the strongest responses, demonstrating how they linked together to form a complex analysis of failure. Weaker responses tended to write predominantly about the role of Napoleon and the army in the coup of 18 Brumaire – and a few went on to describe his role as First Consul – with little or no reference to other factors
My essay plan

(b) 'Economic weakness was the main cause of political instability in France between 1790 and 1795.' How far do you agree with this view? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Output fell, trade declined, and prices rose, hurting finances. ● Assignats issued to manage debt, but inflation soared. ● Food prices rose by 90%, wages by 80%, worsening poverty. ● Poor harvests caused food shortages, sparking riots. ● CPS enacted price controls, leading to hoarding and shortages. ● Thermidorean government worsened inflation by removing controls. ● Louis XVI's hostility to change led to his execution. ● War and uprisings created instability, fueling massacres and the Terror. ● Thermidorian Reaction ended Jacobin rule, but instability remained.
Examiner Report
The quality of response often depended on how well candidates focused on the specified period of the question. Most candidates showed good knowledge of the problems that faced France in the period from 1790 to 1795 though some spent too much time providing background on the events that led up to the calling of the Estates General in 1789. Whilst this does provide background to the problems caused by the king, it is the king's actions in the period specified by the question that were relevant to providing a balanced answer. This included his response to the Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy contributed to the instability during this period in a way that supporting the Americans in the War of Independence did not. Good responses recognised this and explained the key issues with a good balance between economic and other problems. The best responses were able to show how they linked to create the overall issue of political instability.
My essay plan

Question 18
9489 May/June 2021 Paper 23

(a) Explain why Napoleon introduced the Civil Code. [10]

Markscheme Points
● Old feudal system and laws were outdated, needed reform. ● Napoleon aimed to create a unified legal system. ● Wanted to show he was the heir of the Revolution. ● Code established equality before the law. ● Influenced by Roman Law, emphasising male authority and father's rights. ● Code promoted uniformity and centralisation, strengthening Napoleon's control.
Examiner Report
There was a range of understanding of the Civil Code well amongst answers to this question. Stronger responses recognised that it was a legal code that united the disparate legal systems that previously existed in France and confirmed many of the major legal changes of the Revolution, getting rid of outdated feudal laws and customs. The best responses confined themselves to this and produced well-structured and detailed explanations of the benefits of the new Civil Code both for the people of France and for Napoleon's reputation. The main characteristic of weaker responses was that they did not demonstrate clear understanding of the purpose of the Civil Code. Candidates in this category simply included all the reforms that Napoleon carried out, as part of his reform of the law and so were not properly focused on the question.
My essay plan

(b) 'Louis XVI brought about his own downfall'. How far do you agree with this view? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Louis XVI's lack of a clear policy for the cahiers raised unrealistic expectations for the Estates General. ● He showed little political skill, exemplified by his attempt to block the Third Estate's National Assembly formation. ● Inconsistent views on political developments, e.g., opposition and acceptance of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. ● His flight to Varennes in 1791 and secret correspondence in 1792 painted him as a traitor, undermining his position. ● Robespierre used Louis XVI's actions to argue that the Revolution couldn't be stable with him alive, leading to his execution. ● Poor harvests, rising prices, and Enlightenment ideas created a push for change, making radical solutions more appealing. ● War and economic disruption increased radical sentiments, making the king's removal seem inevitable.
Examiner Report
There were some good responses to this question from candidates with a good understanding of the key events of the French Revolution and the driving forces behind them. These provided clear explanation of the role Louis played and his failure to take advantage of opportunities to establish a more democratic government with the monarchy at its head. Key events like his opposition to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy coupled with key mistakes like the Flight to Varennes formed the basis of the case against Louis. This was contrasted with matters that were beyond his control like the severe inflation that inflamed the Paris mob, or the part played by the leaders or extremist republican groups in inciting and directing anti-monarchical protest. Weaker responses often included lengthy narratives, sometimes heavily focused on events before 1789, that provided little evidence to support or challenge the assertion in the question.
My essay plan

Question 19
9489 Feb/March 2021 Paper 22

(a) Explain why the monarchy was abolished in 1792. [10]

Markscheme Points
● Louis XVI showed little enthusiasm for the Revolution, accepting reforms reluctantly (e.g., Civil Constitution of the Clergy). ● His perceived incompetence and indecision undermined trust in him and the constitutional monarchy. ● Social, political, and economic divisions made the new system of constitutional monarchy seem unfeasible. ● The Flight to Varennes in 1791 marked him as a traitor, threatening revolutionary gains. ● Growing support for removing the monarchy, especially among the sans culottes and Jacobins, was fueled by military setbacks.
Examiner Report
The question required an identification of the key factors that led to the abolition of monarchy in France in September 1792. It was not about the execution of the king in January 1793. Most candidates were able to identify some the key factors such as the king's reluctance to accept change, the growing threat of foreign intervention and the rising tide of Republicanism led by groups such as the Jacobins. Weaker responses were more generally about the causes of the revolution and the events between 1789 and 1792. These candidates needed to use the information to explain the abolition of monarchy. Several very weak responses were focused only on the general causes of revolution not on the abolition of monarchy. The best responses were able to explain the significance of several different factors and link them to show how the cumulative effect of different factors led to the decision to abolish monarchy.
My essay plan

(b) How far did Napoleon's domestic policies benefit the French people? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon's founding of the Bank of France (1800) and its state control (1806) established financial stability and creditworthiness. ● The introduction of a stable currency (1803) contributed to France's solvency and economic recovery. ● The Civil Code ensured legal equality and rationalized the legal system, benefiting all citizens. ● Fiscal reforms improved efficiency, continuing efforts that previous governments had failed to achieve. ● Napoleon expanded education and promoted social mobility through the careers open to talents policy. ● Plebiscites, though controlled, promoted a sense of democracy. ● However, property rights primarily benefited the middle class, not the poor. ● Plebiscites were controlled by the government, with the wealthy gaining more influence. ● The Imperial University (1808) restricted academic freedom, controlling the curriculum and teachers. ● The Civil Code reinforced male authority, reversing gains for women made during the Revolution. ● Freedom of speech was curtailed with widespread censorship and surveillance, limiting personal freedoms. ● The shift to indirect taxation burdened consumers, disproportionately affecting the poor.
Examiner Report
Most candidates had good knowledge of the details of Napoleon's domestic policies and wrote relevantly about the topic. Good responses effectively contrasted the overall effect of Napoleon's policies in transforming and improving many aspects of French society, with the adverse effects that his policies had on some sectors of the population. For example, most candidates described and explained the positive effects of the Code Napoleon in simplifying and improving the legal system of France compared to the confusion of systems in pre-revolutionary France. They then contrasted this with the specific issue of the adverse change to the position of women, which was embedded within this system, and compared it to the advances made in women's rights during the years of revolution. The best responses provided well-balanced analysis with clearly supported conclusions that demonstrated a good understanding of the issues involved in judging the overall effects of Napoleon's reforms.
My essay plan

Question 20
9389 Oct/Nov 2021 Paper 21

(a) Why did demands for reform become more radical between 1789 and 1792? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Dispute over voting in the Estates General led to calls for a written constitution and failure of the Estates General. ● Louis XVI's lack of political skill and fears of using troops against Paris sparked the Storming of the Bastille. ● The August Decrees reflected Enlightenment ideas but also highlighted the government's inability to control rural disturbances. ● The Flight to Varennes in 1791 led to calls for the king's removal, such as the petition signing at the Camps de Mars. ● Pressures from war led to the insurrection of August 10, 1792, ending the monarchy and establishing a republic. ● No compromise existed between the Ancien Régime and radical democracy.
Examiner Report
Strong responses were able to cover the full period and explain various factors (e. g role of the king/economic issues/external threats/rise of the Jacobins). Weaker responses described the events of 1789.
My essay plan

(b) How far were Napoleon’s domestic policies aimed at increasing his personal power? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon's use of plebiscites and decline of representative institutions enhanced his power. ● Centralisation of power in Paris under Napoleon and control over education increased his influence. ● The Concordat with the Church helped gain support while ensuring state supremacy over religion. ● Napoleon’s ability to address major issues in 1799 brought stability to France politically, economically, and socially. ● His economic reforms benefited all, and legal reforms contributed to a more egalitarian society.
Examiner Report
Responses which were successful provided a balanced argument by addressing ways Napoleon extended his personal power set against aspects showing a wider concern. Less focused answers examined one aspect, whilst weaker responses described his military career.
My essay plan

Question 21
9389 Oct/Nov 2021 Paper 22

(a) Why was Napoleon able to become increasingly powerful in France after the Brumaire coup? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Lack of alternatives to Napoleon contributed to his rise. ● Military successes boosted his popularity. ● Effective use of police and propaganda enhanced his image. ● Strategic use of the plebiscite helped consolidate power. ● Presented himself as the 'heir to the revolution' to gain support. ● Implemented sensible policies like the Concordat, Civil Code, education, and the Legion d'honneur. ● Balanced national desires for revolution, stability, and a firm government without resembling the Ancien Regime.
Examiner Report
Strong responses kept the questions focus of 'after the Brumaire coup' and presented several explained reasons for Napoleon's increasing power (e. g., propaganda/censorship/policies, such as the Concordat). Less focused responses described his rise to power prior to the Brumaire coup.
My essay plan

(b) 'Divided and leaderless.' How far does this explain the failure of the Counter Revolutionaries? [20]

Markscheme Points
● None of the Louis (XVI, XVII, XVIII) were effective leaders, lacking appeal, vision, or quality to unite France. ● Counter-revolutionaries were divided over key issues such as the role of the Church, constitutionalism, foreign support, and regional differences. ● They were out of touch with French public opinion, especially regarding the acceptance of the 'gains' of 1789–1791. ● The overwhelming demand for the 'gains' of 1789–1791 made a restoration of the Ancien Regime unlikely. ● Counter-revolutionaries' support for war against France made them appear as traitors. ● Military successes by republican generals like Hoche weakened the counter-revolutionary cause. ● Regional divisions, such as in Brittany, hindered effective support for the counter-revolution. ● Lack of quality foreign support, especially from Austria, and Britain's self-interest, also contributed to their failure.
Examiner Report
Responses which were successful provided a balanced argument by addressing the ways divisions and lack of leadership caused failure, assessed against other causes of failure (e. g., extent of revolutionary fervour/the Terror/foreign support). Other responses focused on one side of the argument, and less successful ones provided a narrative/descriptive account of the topic.
My essay plan

Question 22
9389 Oct/Nov 2021 Paper 23

(a) Why did the Jacobins become increasingly powerful? [10]

Markscheme Points
● They achieved a high degree of unity at key moments and communicated effectively within their group. ● Gained support both in Paris and other urban areas. ● Had several powerful and capable leaders, such as Robespierre. ● Offered radical and plausible policies after the execution of the King. ● Well-connected in local and provincial government. ● Effective at using propaganda and the free press. ● Their festivals and de-Christianising movement were popular with many.
Examiner Report
There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.
My essay plan

(b) 'The Directory fell because it could not manage the French economy.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● An acceptable system of taxation could not be established, and wars caused serious economic problems. ● Real hunger continued in many parts of France, and the currency issue remained unresolved. ● Two bad harvests occurred during their rule. ● The legislature was too strong, and the executive was too weak to govern effectively. ● The regime lacked legitimacy, and Napoleon's ambitions played a role. ● The Directory failed to deal with threats from both the Left (Jacobins) and the Right (Royalists). ● There was no consensus in France for a system of government, and the Directory had to manage multiple problems after the Terror and the King's execution. ● The Directory allowed the military to become too powerful.
Examiner Report
There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.
My essay plan

Question 23
9389 May/June 2021 Paper 21

(a) Why was the Estates General divided in 1789? [10]

Markscheme Points
• The diversity of issues raised in the cahiers highlighted the need for changes. • Higher/aristocratic clergy opposed to change, while lower clergy sympathized with radical demands of the Third Estate. • A rich vs. poor divide existed within the clergy, along with the influence of thinkers like Sieyés. • Divisions within the aristocracy, with wealthy members opposing change and radicals like Lafayette advocating for reform. • The Third Estate was divided, ranging from conservative constitutional monarchists to radical anti-monarchists. • Major disagreements existed between the Estates, particularly over voting procedures. • Additional divisions arose between urban and rural representatives.
Examiner Report
Strong responses were often able to explain the division within the Estates General over taxation issues and the unfair system of voting; occasionally the issues raised by the cahiers that required changes were discussed. Less successful responses would identify a relevant division without explanation. Weaker responses took too much time narrating events that led to the calling of the Estates General or describing the respective characteristics of each estate; some narrated about King Louis XVI locking out the Third Estate and the resulting Tennis Court Oath.
My essay plan

(b) 'The Directory governed France well.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● The Directory introduced a period of relative calm after the Terror. ● It aimed to be constructive, addressing the Revolution's destructive legacy before 1795. ● Successfully managed wars against major enemies, including Britain and Austria. ● Attempted to address issues like the currency, the Church, and local government with some success. ● Tried to establish a balanced constitutional system between monarchists and social revolutionaries. ● Struggled with legitimacy and failed to appear as a legitimate government to many. ● Unable to effectively address the complexity of religious and constitutional issues. ● Perceived as a group of middle-class men managing France in their own interests. ● Did not fully grasp the extent of France's social and economic problems. ● Allowed Bonaparte excessive control over the Italian campaign, its aftermath, and the expedition to Egypt. ● Britain proved to be an impractical enemy during the 1790s.
Examiner Report
The few successful responses discussed relevant arguments about the extent that the Directory governed France well, referring to the relative stability that existed compared to the Reign of Terror that had preceded it, managing the largely successful wars against Austria, for example, or dealing with the Babeuf Plot in 1796. Less effective responses described aspects of the Directory government system and the take-over of Napoleon in 1799. Weaker responses wrote in general terms or confused the Directory with Robespierre's administration or the monarchy of Louis XVI. Some drifted into a narrative of Napoleon's rule post-Brumaire.
My essay plan

Question 24
9389 May/June 2021 Paper 22

(a) Why did French revolutionaries between 1789 and 1795 find it hard to agree on what kind of government they wanted? [10]

Markscheme Points
• Disagreement over the role of the King/Monarchy: whether to retain autocracy, reform it, or abolish it. • The King's reluctance to lead decisively and his unwillingness to compromise, highlighted by the flight to Varennes and connections with foreign powers. • Legitimacy issues after the King's execution, including questions about the location and nature of sovereignty. • Significant class issues, particularly over how far down the social scale participation should extend. • Splits between various factions and clubs, as well as divisions between regions, Paris, towns, and rural areas. • Deep divisions over the Church's role, wealth, and societal position.
Examiner Report
Most responses reached L3 because they understood that the basic dilemma of the revolution was over what sort of monarchy was possible or whether to retain monarchy at all. For many this took the form of a lengthy account of the differences between the Girondin and the Jacobin that amounted to one explained factor. Only a minority of responses considered the wider divisions created by regional differences or by the indecisiveness of the King himself as a catalyst for divisions.
My essay plan

(b) 'Napoleon's domestic policies brought great benefits to France.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
• Resolved revolutionary issues and signed the Concordat, separating church and state. • Introduced educational reforms, legal codification, and local government rationalization. • Promoted meritocracy and regulated food prices. • Reintroduced hereditary rule and engaged in destructive wars. • Overregulated commerce, imposed censorship, and curtailed freedoms. • Created a police state under Fouché.
Examiner Report
Most responses had a good understanding of the reforms that Napoleon made and could describe them, sometimes in very great detail, but then found it difficult to link them to the specific issue of whether they brought great benefit to France. Most were able to describe, with reasonably accurate detail, the domestic policies of Napoleon and stronger responses were able to suggest how they benefitted France. The strongest responses were also able to identify specific areas of policy that were not beneficial. Weaker responses often struggled with these, some restricting their comments to limitations of the freedom of women or the use of censorship. It was much easier to make a case for beneficial than for the alternative, but the stronger responses provided some measure of balance and a few even suggested that, overall, there was more positive than negative and that there were great benefits at a relatively small cost but these were few in number.
My essay plan

Question 25

9389 May/June 2021 Paper 23

(a) Why did the execution of the King fail to end political instability in France? [10]

Markscheme Points
• Louis left an heir. • Many defenders of the Ancien Régime remained. • Major social and economic issues persisted. • The Church's status was unresolved. • Revolutionaries were divided between moderates and radicals. • Press freedom enabled the spread of radical ideas.
Examiner Report
Most responses provided an explanation of the basic instability caused by the Reign of Terror that divided the French people and ended only with the overthrow of Robespierre and the formation of the Directory. Stronger responses were able to identify further destabilising factors including the Revolutionary Wars that broke out in 1792, the continuing social and economic issues, the divisions between moderates and extremists (generally identified as Girondin and Jacobin), the outbreak of regional revolts against Robespierre's regime and the existence/effect of significant émigrés groups supporting a return to monarchy. A few weaker responses wrote in general terms about the execution of the king without direct reference to the question.
My essay plan

(b) 'A popular dictator.' Assess this view of Napoleon. [20]

Markscheme Points
• Plebiscites demonstrated strong support for Napoleon. • His victories and territorial gains brought glory and stability to France. • He faced minimal opposition and was welcomed back from Elba in 1814. • Napoleon was the key decision-maker in policy, including the Concordat and Civil Code. • Centralized control was ensured through Prefects and measures like D'Enghien's execution. • Censorship and a police state under Fouché were enforced. • Censorship and press restrictions were necessary for his regime. • He relied heavily on Fouché and the police force. • Wars caused resentment due to taxation and conscription. • Despite these, broad consent existed for his policies, addressing middle-class aspirations. • Poverty was mitigated through measures like bread price controls, avoiding unrest. • His overall popularity persisted, as seen in 1814.
Examiner Report
Some weaker responses struggled with the two separate issues of 'popular' and 'dictator'. Responses that fell into this category tended to just provide a description of some of the reforms that Napoleon introduced with little direct link to the question. Stronger versions of this provided some details of reforms and commentary on whether they were popular or not. Only a minority of candidates went beyond this sort of response to consider Napoleon's methods and whether they showed he was, despite his popularity, a dictator who imposed censorship, appointed Prefects to control all the regions of France and created a new social hierarchy with himself at the top as Emperor. Responses which successfully did this achieved the higher marks.
My essay plan

Question 26
9389 Oct/Nov 2020 Paper 21

(a) Why was Napoleon able to overthrow the Directory? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The Directory lacked legitimacy and was viewed as a temporary solution rather than a stable regime. ● It faced significant threats from royalists, the right, and figures like Babeuf on the left. ● Ongoing wars often brought difficulties, adding to instability. ● Economic problems that contributed to the revolution remained unresolved. ● Napoleon capitalized on public desire for stability, strong government, and international glory. ● He had the army's support and a history of success, bringing prestige to France. ● Key allies like Lucien Bonaparte, Fouché, and Sieyès enhanced his position.
Examiner Report
Good responses provided a very thorough explanation of the reasons why Napoleon was able to overthrow the Directory. Responses attributed Napoleon's success to a combination of factors (e.g. exploitation of his military reputation/aid provided by his brother, Lucien/manipulation of elections by the Directory undermined its legitimacy). Such responses could have been improved by outlining the inter-relations between the factors/relative significance of factors. Less successful responses described the events of 1799 whilst weaker responses confused the overthrow with the events of 1789.
My essay plan

(b) Louis XVI was responsible for the political instability of 1789 to 1792.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Louis failed to support necessary radical reforms and resisted measures for change, fostering mistrust. ● His lukewarm acceptance of reforms in 1789/90 and reliance on royal troops heightened tensions, leading to events like the storming of the Bastille. ● Actions like the flight to Varennes and support for Austria reinforced perceptions of treason. ● He lacked the personal aptitude to handle the challenges of leadership during this period. ● However, the extent of France's social, economic, and political issues in 1789 was overwhelming for any single leader. ● Long-standing flaws in the Ancien Régime, left unaddressed for decades, made reform efforts exceedingly difficult. ● The radicalism of the revolutionaries and divisions among reformers compounded instability. ● The actions of Marie Antoinette, émigrés, and conservative nobles and clergy further undermined stability and reform efforts.
Examiner Report
Good responses were able to assess Louis XVI's contribution to political instability (e.g. his failure to deal effectively with the issue of voting in the Estates General/the flight to Varennes) against several other issues (e.g. increasing radicalisation/the impact of war). Reponses which were less successful provided a narrative of events, often focusing on 1789 and weaker responses focused on events post-1792.
My essay plan

Question 27
9389 Oct/Nov 2020 Paper 22

(a) Why was Napoleon interested in domestic reform? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon sought to present himself as the 'heir to the revolution,' aligning with revolutionary ideals. ● He had to appeal to various social classes, particularly the middle class and conservative peasantry, to consolidate support. ● He aimed to restore stability to France after years of turmoil and upheaval. ● His desire to secure his own power led to reforms that had lasting effects, with many enduring into the 19th century.
Examiner Report
Most candidates were able to offer a number of suggestions about the benefits Napoleon saw in domestic reform. Good responses provided detailed explanation of some of Napoleon's most important domestic reforms, highlighting the benefits that could be gained from them.' Less successful responses made general comments about reform without reference to their benefits for Napoleon or gave no detail of the sort of reforms in which he might be interested.
My essay plan

(b) 'Division amongst the revolutionaries was the main cause of political instability in France between 1789 and 1795.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Poverty, food shortages, and poor harvests drove unrest, with the price of bread linked to the sansculottes' extremism. ● Taxation and the issuing of Assignats were major issues. ● The King's opposition to reforms, including the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, deepened divisions. ● The King and his Court, along with émigrés and their anti-revolutionary actions, contributed to instability. ● The strains of war after 1792 worsened the situation. ● Revolutionary extremism, such as the Jacobins and the Terror, intensified divisions. ● Disagreement over the King's fate and the form of government deepened splits. ● Regional divisions and resentment of Paris's control of national affairs. ● Destruction of the Ancien Régime without a clear new social order.
Examiner Report
There was a wide range of responses to this question. Weaker responses struggled with the issue of deciding who the revolutionaries were. Good responses reflected on the difference between moderate and extreme groups and were able to trace how the changes in government reflected the balance of power in the struggle between them. They were then able to present alternative factors that contributed to instability such as the actions of the king and the threat of foreign intervention. The best responses were able to reflect on the overall effect of these. With proper support this sort of conclusion could reach the highest level. Weaker responses tended to be narrative accounts of part of the period, often presenting general information about the causes of the revolution which were not properly focused on the question set.
My essay plan

Question 28
9389 Oct/Nov 2020 Paper 23

(a) Why did the working-class people in Paris play such an important part in the Revolution? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Triggered important events like the storming of the Bastille, the March to Versailles, and bringing the royal family back to Paris. ● Provided critical support for the Assembly in 1790 and during the Champ de Mars incident in 1791. ● Played a key role in the assault on the Tuileries and the September massacres in 1792. ● Contributed to the start and end of the Terror. ● Ended support for the Directory, leading to the coup that brought Napoleon to power. ● Their role arguably led to the desire for an authoritarian regime to restore order, marking the end of the Revolution.
Examiner Report
Many candidates based their accounts on the misapprehension that the working class were synonymous with the Third Estate and so much of their analysis was partially flawed. Good responses focused specifically on the Sans Culottes and their role in various events from the storming of the Bastille to the Reign of Terror accounting for their importance in these events,
My essay plan

(b) 'Napoleon had the support of his army.' How far does this explain the success of the Brumaire coup d'état of 1799? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon's army support made him a national figure, bringing glory to France and securing the coup. ● The army ensured the success of the coup and eliminated armed opposition. ● The Directory lacked legitimacy and failed to provide stability. ● No credible leader from either the left or right emerged. ● Lack of consensus on how France should be governed. ● Most people wanted stability while preserving the gains of 1789-91. ● The unpopular war, with increased taxation and conscription, added to the instability. ● Napoleon's ambition, success, and timing made him a strong alternative. ● Napoleon's support from figures like his brother, Fouché, and Sieyès helped solidify his position. ● His propaganda skills and political acumen distinguished him.
Examiner Report
There was a tendency in many responses to write a description of Napoleon's successes as an army general and how this made him popular with both the army and the public in general but with no reference to the role of the army in the Brumaire Coup. Such responses often benefited from making a clear case for the influence of other factors such as the failings and unpopularity of the Directorate. Better responses also made specific reference to the role of Abbe Sieyes and Lucienne Bonaparte in managing the Coup.' Good responses gave a balanced analysis of the different factors but few made any significant judgements about relative importance.
My essay plan

Question 29
9389 May/June 2020 Paper 21

(a) Why did Louis XVI oppose demands for reform in 1789? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Louis took a solemn coronation oath to uphold the Ancien Regime. ● He was a conservative believer in the Divine Right of Kings. ● His wife and many courtiers at Versailles were opposed to change. ● The clergy and nobility, particularly the first and second Estates, opposed reforms. ● The sheer scale of demands for change contributed to his inaction. ● Louis was easily influenced by those around him and incapable of executing any serious reforms.
Examiner Report
N/A (COVID-19)
My essay plan

(b) 'The counter-revolutionaries failed through poor leadership.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Leadership was divided, with some wanting a return to the Ancien Regime, others advocating for a constitutional monarchy. ● There was resistance to accepting the need for real change by senior figures. ● There was no strong leader after the King's execution, and the heir died young. ● Louis XVIII seemed more interested in retirement in England than ruling. ● Many leaders focused on trivial issues, such as nobility, rather than meaningful action. ● Foreign support was limited and often motivated by ulterior motives, such as the British. ● Support in France, particularly in the Vendee and Brittany, was inconsistent and regionally motivated. ● Many potential supporters were unwilling to leave their regions. ● Most French people wanted to retain the gains of 1789-91. ● Aligning with foreign support was seen as treasonous by many.
Examiner Report
N/A (COVID-19)
My essay plan

Question 30
9389 May/June 2020 Paper 22

(a) Why did a counter-revolutionary movement emerge after 1789? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Genuine support for the monarchy and the ancien regime. ● Fear of uncharted political and constitutional changes. ● Nobility and higher clergy defending their privileges and wealth. ● Fear of radicalism and opposition to radical changes like the seizure of Church wealth and the new calendar. ● The extremism of the Jacobins and the Terror. ● Support from abroad, including Austria and Britain. ● Regional dislike of the increasing domination of Paris.
Examiner Report
N/A (COVID-19)
My essay plan

(b) To what extent did foreign wars affect the course of the French Revolution prior to 1799? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Foreign wars were integral to the rise of Napoleon, arguably ending the revolution. ● Wars drove extreme actions, like the Terror, to protect the revolution. ● Wars were costly, leading to increased taxation and conscription, which fueled hostility and support for counter-revolutionary movements. ● Military successes, such as Jemappes and Fleurus, boosted loyalty to the revolution and the regime's prestige. ● The wars led to the creation of a large army, which repressed counter-revolutionary movements, like the work of Hoche and his troops. ● The wars resulted in territorial gains (Piedmont, Rhineland, and Belgium), increasing France's size by 20% and boosting popularity. ● Successful armies and generals led to the Directory losing control of its military, contributing to its downfall. ● Without foreign wars, the course of the Revolution might have been very different.
Examiner Report
N/A (COVID-19)
My essay plan

Question 31
9389 May/June 2020 Paper 23

(a) Why were political clubs, such as the Jacobins, set up during the Revolution? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Lack of leadership and effective policies by the King and his ministers created a leadership void. ● Political inexperience was evident among the membership of the Convention/Assembly. ● Regionalism played a role, with factions like the Girondins representing different regions. ● The Clubs provided essential policies, debate, and coordination for action in the Assembly. ● They served as centres for meeting, such as for the pro and anti-war factions or those supporting or opposing the execution of the King.
Examiner Report
N/A (COVID-19)
My essay plan

(b) 'Effective propaganda was the main reason why Napoleon remained in power for so long.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon sold himself successfully as the heir to the revolution, presenting his regime impressively. ● He carefully censored and controlled the press, emphasizing his military victories and the glory they brought to France. ● He managed to present his failures, like Trafalgar, in a positive light or blamed others. ● He provided stable government and maintained the important gains of the revolution, especially for the middle class. ● He enacted lasting reforms like the Concordat and the Civil Code, which contributed to his longevity. ● There was no strong alternative to his rule, and Louis was not a real threat. ● His military victories and territorial gains were popular and contributed to his support.
Examiner Report
N/A (COVID-19)
My essay plan

Question 32
9389 Oct/Nov 2019 Paper 21

(a) Why were so many reforms passed by the Legislative Assembly in 1791 and 1792? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The Legislative Assembly (Oct 1791) introduced reforms like divorce, inheritance rights, and government control over registration. ● It targeted émigrés as traitors, establishing punishments for them. ● It addressed unresolved issues from the National Constituent Assembly, such as requiring non-juring clergy to take a civic oath. ● The king's actions, like the flight to Varennes, led to more revolutionary measures. ● War in 1792 increased revolutionary sentiment, leading to the king's suspension and the creation of the National Convention.
Examiner Report
Successful responses focused on the Legislative Assembly showing understanding of causes, such as the need to deal with unresolved issues (e.g. non-juring clergy), the king's attitude and the impact of war. Less successful responses did not distinguish between the work of the Legislative Assembly and that of the National (Constituent) Assembly. Thus, there were references to the need to abolish feudalism, rein in absolutism and promote new freedoms.
My essay plan

(b) 'He was a successful and popular general.' To what extent does this explain why Napoleon was able to retain power?' [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon's military successes, particularly in Italy, and his ability to bring glory to France with victories like Austerlitz and Jena, were crucial for his rise to power. ● The Directory lacked popular support, and Napoleon promised stability after the Terror. ● Politically, he retained revolutionary gains while establishing an autocracy. ● He skillfully downplayed failures like the Nile, Trafalgar, and retreats from Moscow and Madrid. ● He catered to both the bourgeoisie and conservative peasantry, using propaganda effectively. ● He dealt with religious issues through the Concordat, invested in infrastructure, and addressed bread supply. ● The Civil Code and educational reforms were popular, and while he employed some repression, it was not excessive.
Examiner Report
A common feature of responses was to set up an obvious contrast; ways that Napoleon's success and popularity as a general helped him retain power set against other factors which helped him retain power. There were some good responses seen from many candidates who took this approach, showing a sound depth of knowledge and understanding of key developments such as Napoleon's Italian campaign, victories at Austerlitz and Jena, the Concordat with the Papacy, the Napoleonic Code and his use of propaganda and censorship. Answers that were less successful provided a narrative of events or lost the question's focus and cited examples of Napoleon's lack of popularity.
My essay plan

Question 33
9389 Oct/Nov 2019 Paper 22

(a) Why was there no successful counter-revolution between 1789 and 1799? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The Ancien régime was associated with social and economic issues, and there was little support for the king. ● Counter-revolutionaries who fled abroad were seen as traitors attempting to restore the monarchy. ● The National Convention abolished the monarchy and established the republic. After the executions of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, and the Dauphin's death, the counter-revolutionaries lost focus and lacked coordination. ● Austria, Prussia, and Britain formed a coalition against France in 1793, but French defeats strengthened the resolve of extremists. The Reign of Terror handled internal opposition. ● Most French people didn't want to return to pre-revolutionary times. ● The revolutionary government raised a massive army, and victories like those against Austria in 1794 boosted French morale. ● The Directory replaced the National Convention in 1795 and brought a period of stability, surviving until overthrown by Napoleon in 1799.
Examiner Report
Good responses covered the whole period including the failure of the king in the early years, the strength of Republicanism and the effects of the reign of Terror and the success of the Directory in supressing the counter-revolutionaries. Weaker responses did not make use of the opportunity to assess the failure of counter-revolutionaries across the whole period and often stopped with the execution of the king. A minority of responses discussed the Estates General and the causes of the Revolution with limited understanding of what the question was asking for
My essay plan

(b) How far had the ideals of 'liberty, equality and fraternity' been established in France by the end of 1792? [20]

Markscheme Points
● By 1792, the revolution was fragile: the King, foreign threats, poverty, and internal opposition persisted. ● Revolutionaries were divided between moderates and radicals. ● However, by 1789, key changes had been made: the fall of the Bastille, abolition of feudalism, and dismantling of Ancien régime institutions. ● The National Assembly became the leader, and the nobility lost privileges. ● Local government became democratic, and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy ended clerical privilege, solidifying revolutionary gains.
Examiner Report
Stronger responses often began with a clear introduction which set out suggestions about changes that had contributed to improvements in equality and a counter argument about how far inequalities remained. Weaker responses struggled with how changes in liberty, equality and fraternity might be measured and were often a narrative account about the Revolution, concentrating on the early events like the meeting of the Estate General and the Fall of the Bastille
My essay plan

Question 34

9389 Oct/Nov 2019 Paper 23

(a) Why was the Brumaire coup d'état successful? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon was seen as a successful general who supported revolutionary gains, not as a radical or reactionary. ● The Directory was unpopular, inefficient, and lacked strong support, viewed as temporary. ● Opposition grew from both the left (Jacobin revival) and right (royalists), with uprisings threatening stability. ● Sieyes supported the coup to further his political ambitions. ● Napoleon's brother played a key role in persuading the lower chamber to accept the coup. ● The military forced the Council of Ancients to accept the coup, leading to a new, popular constitution created quickly.
Examiner Report
The context was well understood by the majority of candidates who produced well supported reasons linked to the failure and unpopularity of the Directory and the popularity of Napoleon. General statements were supported by specific details of a government weakened by opposition from Jacobins and Royalists, the financial instability and the overseas victories of Napoleon, coupled with the subversive intentions of Sieyes, to produce a convincing explanation of the success of Napoleon in 1799. Some of the weaker responses discussed 'success' in terms of what Napoleon achieved after he took control.
My essay plan

(b) To what extent was French government and society reformed by the end of 1791? [20]

Markscheme Points
● National and Legislative Assemblies central to government. ● Feudalism abolished, rights declared, monarchy reduced. ● Civil Constitution of the Clergy nationalized Church. ● Local elections, judicial reforms implemented. ● King's reluctance, counter-revolutionaries questioned reforms. ● Foreign invasion threat, flight to Varennes increased opposition.
Examiner Report
Weaker responses often contained substantial detail of the meetings of the Estates General, the problems of voting, the Tennis court Oath and the Storming of the Bastille but then did not develop these points with explanation of what had changed by 1791 and what had stayed the same. Strong responses showed a good understanding of the measures introduced by the National Assembly and were able to demonstrate how the government had been transformed into a constitutional monarchy by the end of 1791. These responses were also able to discuss how that change was limited, especially for those lower down the social scale, along with growing opposition from supporters of the king, resistance from the King himself and growing support for the King from abroad which threatened the reforms already achieved
My essay plan

Question 35

9389 May/June 2019 Paper 21

(a) Why was the Tennis Court Oath taken? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Louis XVI called Estates-General in May 1789 due to financial issues. ● Dispute over voting method led to deadlock. ● Third Estate, joined by some clergy and nobles, declared themselves National Assembly on 17 June 1789. ● Locked out, they took the Tennis Court Oath on 20 June, pledging not to separate until a constitution was established. ● The oath was a protest and an assertion of political authority from the people, not the king.
Examiner Report
Good responses were able to place the Oath in the context of the calling of the Estates General, the resulting divisions within it, the king's miscalculation in trying to stop the newly formed National Assembly meeting and explaining the Oath's aims. Less successful responses provided lengthy narratives about the profligate spending of the French royal family and/or went beyond the swearing of the Oath (e.g. the Storming of the Bastille).
My essay plan

(b) Analyse the reasons why Napoleon was popular with the French people. [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon was a successful general, gaining attention and support through self-promotion and military victories. ● His victories at Austerlitz (1805) and Jena (1806) solidified his position. ● Despite defeats in Spain, Russia, and Leipzig, he retained support due to reaction against the Directory and revolutionary excesses. ● He represented stability while adopting some elements of the Revolution and rejecting others, like the Terror and Dechristianisation. ● The Concordat (1801) with the Pope helped pacify Catholics. ● Napoleon was an effective propagandist, creating the Legion of Honour in 1802 to reward achievements. ● The French Civil Code (1804) abolished feudalism, confirmed legal rights, and promoted equality before the law. ● He improved administration, infrastructure, and peasant support, avoiding past grievances. ● His approach was a form of "enlightened despotism."
Examiner Report
Responses which were effective grasped the questionís focus of ‘popularity’ and assessed the relative significance of, for example, Napoleonís military achievements, the creation of the Concordat with the Pope, the setting up of the Napoleonic Code and his use of propaganda as explanations for his popularity with the French people. Less well-focused responses examined why he was both popular and unpopular.
My essay plan

Question 36

9389 May/June 2019 Paper 22

(a) Why was the Bastille stormed? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The attack on the Bastille was the result of events tracing back to the summoning of the Estates-General. ● There were high hopes for the Estates-General, but by July 1789, no real change had occurred. ● Hunger and rising food prices in Paris contributed to the unrest. ● Fear arose that the King might use foreign mercenaries to enforce his rule, not French soldiers. ● Tension in Paris was heightened by fear, rumors, royal indecision, and a breakdown in law and order. ● The Bastille, symbolizing royal authority, was seen as an obvious target, though it posed no real threat. ● The Parisians sought access to the Bastille's stores of gunpowder and weapons, fearing royal reprisals.
Examiner Report
Most candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of the events surrounding the beginning of the French Revolution but the ways in which they used this knowledge separated the good from the weaker responses. Strong responses kept a clear focus on the specific event in the question and argued it was the result of the kingís actions in relation to the meeting of the National Assembly and his dismissal of the popular finance minister, coupled with the fears of the population of Paris that the king was moving a large armed force to surround the city and their belief that the Bastille had a large store of gunpowder/weapons. Weaker responses wrote generally about the Estates General and the problems of France without focussing on the specific issues of why the Bastille was stormed.
My essay plan

(b) Which better describes the period of the Directory: 'revolutionary chaos' or 'a period of real achievement'? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Continued coups and political difficulties in 1796 and 1797 led to the overthrow of the government. ● Focus was placed on threats from the Left and Right, neglecting the economy, which was the primary concern due to inflation. ● Corruption at all levels of government became widespread. ● The de-Christianisation programme's problems remained unresolved. ● The government was viewed as temporary, awaiting something better. ● A private army under Bonaparte became a growing concern. ● The period was calm compared to the chaos after 1788. ● The Terror ended, executions declined, and the sans-culottes and royalists lost power. ● Recovery followed the harsh winter of 1794-5, alleviating hunger. ● The Constitution of 1795 worked well, marking progress from centuries of autocracy. ● Annual elections were successfully managed. ● Napoleon's leadership of a large army was highly successful. ● Judicial and local government reforms were implemented effectively. ● The separation of powers was successfully applied. ● Efforts to address assignats and national debt showed some success.
Examiner Report
Many candidates who attempted this question showed a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the Directory government. Stronger answers often included a comparison of the relative stability of the late 1890s with the real 'chaos' that preceded it under Robespierre and went on to look at other achievements like constructing balanced system of government, holding democratic elections, reducing debt etc. and generally returning to trying to achieve the revolutionary aims the early 1890s. The 'chaos' argument linked to this included the number of attempted coups, financial weakness, general discontent and dependence on the army to maintain order, a relationship that eventually led to its overthrow. Weaker responses were often limited to discussing the failures, Robespierre or they wrote about Napoleonís coup and its consequences, not addressing the focus of the question.
My essay plan

Question 37
9389 May/June 2019 Paper 23

(a) Why was the National Assembly formed? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The Estates-General was called on 5 May 1789 to address France's financial crisis. ● The Third Estate, seeing itself as the most representative, could not work with the clergy (First Estate) and nobility (Second Estate). ● On 17 June, the Third Estate declared itself the National Assembly, joined by some nobles and most clergy. ● They adopted Sieyes' ideas that sovereignty lay with the majority of France, and only they could decide on taxes. ● The King's indecision and the national crisis contributed to their growing credibility. ● Despite the King's order to dissolve the Assembly, they continued meeting at a tennis court and swore to not disband until a constitution was written.
Examiner Report
Candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the events that led to the outbreak of the French Revolution and many provided detailed accounts of the calling and working of the Estates General. Stronger responses explained why the National Assembly became necessary in the eyes of certain groups. Weaker responses often provided a list of problems that led to the French Revolution and left some groups dissatisfied, without linking this information to the specific focus of the question.
My essay plan

(b) Assess the reasons why Napoleon was able to bring stability to France. [20]

Markscheme Points
● After the chaos of the Ancien Régime, the Terror, and the ineffective Directory, any regime offering stability and legitimacy was welcomed. ● Napoleon quickly established legitimacy, partly through a plebiscite, and gave the impression he was there to stay. ● He balanced autocracy with popular revolutionary ideas, gaining broad support. ● As a successful general, he brought military victories and territorial gains, which boosted his popularity. ● He was an effective propagandist and used censorship to maintain control. ● His sensible relationship with the Church helped restore stability. ● He invested in infrastructure, ensured food supply, and maintained law and order. ● Napoleon's "careers open to talent" policy gained support from previously alienated classes. ● The Code restored faith in the judiciary, and his education reforms earned middle-class support. ● He understood public desires and delivered accordingly, which contributed to stability.
Examiner Report
Many candidates were familiar with the reforms that Napoleon introduced and his method of maintaining order. Strong responses produced a balance response analysing both the positive achievements that won popularity and the repressive measures that limited opposition. More sophisticated responses drew attention to the combination of revolutionary ideas with more traditional approaches to control. Weaker responses provided limited detail about a narrower range of issues. Few candidates were able to reach supported judgements about the relative importance of different measures
My essay plan

Question 38
9389 Oct/Nov 2018 Paper 21

(a) Why did the Terror come to an end in 1794? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The revolution became too radical and alienated many, especially with the De-Christianisation campaign, which upset rural areas. ● The military situation improved, with victories like the British evacuation of Toulon (1793) and the Republic's army defeating the Coalition at Fleurus (1794), reducing the need for radical measures. ● With the deaths of Danton and Robespierre, there was an opportunity to return to a more constitutional approach. ● The immediate threat to the gains of 1790–91 had passed, creating space for moderation. ● Moderates feared dictatorship or a return to monarchy, leading them to seek a stable path that preserved earlier revolutionary gains. ● Those behind the coup that led to Robespierre's death didn't intend to end the Terror but used the power vacuum to reduce its excesses.
Examiner Report
Virtually all candidates were able to explain, with varying degrees of depth and accuracy, why the Terror came to an end in 1794. Weaker responses provided a narrative of what the Terror did rather than why it ended, and so provided no link to causation.
My essay plan

(b) The aims of the Revolution had been achieved by the end of 1791.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Revolutionaries had varied aims, with some seeking radical changes and others favoring a constitutional monarchy with minor social and religious reforms. ● The Ancien Régime was overthrown, but there was no clear plan for rebuilding, with fiscal instability and unresolved taxation issues continuing. ● Regional changes were limited, and many of the changes were superficial, especially while a Bourbon still held the throne. ● Key changes included the reform of the justice system and the cracking of the feudal system, which were significant improvements. ● The Civil Constitution of the Clergy was a major step forward, though its full implementation remained uncertain. ● The King accepted the new Constitution in theory, but the sincerity of this acceptance, especially regarding foreign policy, was unclear. ● By the end of 1791, the aims of the revolutionaries had become more defined, though the process was still ongoing.
Examiner Report
A common feature of answers was to set up an obvious contrast; ways the aims of the Revolution had been achieved by 1791 versus ways the aims of the Revolution had not been achieved by 1791. There were some excellent responses seen from many candidates who took this approach, showing a good depth of knowledge and understanding of key developments such as the August decrees of 1789, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, 1790 and the Kingís acceptance of the new Constitution, 1791, the lack of fiscal stability and the Kingís grudging acceptance of his role as a constitutional monarch. Less successful responses provided a narrative of events and often ignored the questionís timeframe.
My essay plan

Question 39
9389 Oct/Nov 2018 Paper 22

(a) Why did the Directory survive for four years? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Strong reaction to the excesses of the Terror and Jacobins. ● Dislike of the De-Christianisation process; the conservative appearance of the Directory had wide appeal. ● Positioned between the extremes of the Ancien Régime and the Terror. ● Weak and divided opposition from Jacobins and Royalists. ● Successful foreign policy and progress in the war. ● Support from the army. ● Semi-democratic institutions were made to work. ● Sensible administration of the state and localities.
Examiner Report
There were many good responses to this question. Better responses showed a clear understanding of where the Directory fitted into the progression of regimes during and after the French Revolution and were able to identify a number of appropriate causes for the duration of the Directoryís rule. Some weaker responses concentrated too much on what had gone before whilst others devoted too much attention to the role of Napoleon.
My essay plan

(b) To what extent was lower-class unrest the driving force of the Revolution from 1789 to 1794? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Storming of the Bastille and refusal to pay taxes. ● The Great Fear and the September Massacres. ● Reaction to the flight to Varennes and outbursts of severe rural unrest. ● Dire conditions and hunger in the countryside in early 1789. ● Middle-class unrest due to lack of representation. ● Radicals mostly from middle-class backgrounds, manipulating lower-class unrest. ● Refusal of the monarchy to compromise, increasing appeal of radical solutions. ● Constant pressure of war after 1792. ● Need to find a way of governing the country to achieve popular support.
Examiner Report
Stronger responses were clear in identifying who they saw as being the ëlower-classí. Many candidates wrote clearly about what happened between 1789 and 1794, some in considerable detail. Stronger responses included an assessment of which aspects of the revolution could be linked specifically to the ëlower-classesí, with the best responses able to offer some comment on the relative importance of this group.
My essay plan

Question 40
9389 Oct/Nov 2018 Paper 23

(a) Why did Napoleon face so little opposition to his rule in France? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Ensured worst features of the Ancien Regime did not reappear. ● Accepted the 'best' of the Revolution, like the Civil Code, which lasted. ● Ensured the supply and quality of bread to prevent hunger. ● The Concordat resolved the ‘Catholic’ issue, with religious toleration for Protestants. ● Successful foreign campaigns raised his prestige and France's. ● Censorship and Fouché's work helped repress dissent. ● ‘Careers open to talent’ provided opportunities, especially for the middle class. ● Plebiscites gave the impression of consent. ● Mix of glory and good government was popular, especially after the instability of the 1790s.
Examiner Report
Most candidates were able to identify several factors that helped Napoleon maintain his power and the main discriminator was how well this knowledge was used. The best responses provided a clear and concise explanation of the role of several factors, like the Code Napoleon, adoption of some of the key ideas of the Revolution and use of censorship and rewards to maintain support. Few responses went further than this in reaching a comparative judgement about the significance of different factors.
My essay plan

(b) 'The Directory successfully restored order to France.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● By end of 1795, more peace and stability than since 1789. ● Success in the Italian campaign, competent war and foreign policy management. ● Radicals like Babeuf dealt with, and a working constitution developed. ● No major uprisings, competent local government, and signs of a workable police system. ● Genuine attempts to address hunger and restore central control while considering local needs. ● Royalist and neo-Jacobin gains in elections, showing lack of consensus on governance. ● Directory seen as a temporary measure, lacking legitimacy. ● Partial bankruptcy and debt repudiation in 1797. ● Multiple coups, including 18 Fructidor V, 22 Floreal VI, 30 Prairial VII, and the final Brumaire coup. ● Relative ease of Directory's overthrow suggests lack of success.
Examiner Report
Candidates who were able to identify success and failures of the Directory were able to produce solid response to this question. The best responses discriminated effectively between short term success and longer-term failures, for example using the army to quell potential revolts but failing to build a solid support base for this new form of government. Weaker answers wrote extensively about what went before but showed only limited understanding of the work of the Directory, whilst others focused too much on the role of Napoleon.
My essay plan

Question 41
9389 May/June 2018 Paper 21

(a) Why was there increasing hostility towards the King from 1789 to 1793? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Increased reluctance of the King and his entourage to compromise on sovereignty or accept a constitutional monarchy. ● It became clear that the revolutionary gains of 1790–91 would not last under Louis. The royal family's behavior indicated hostility to the revolution. ● No evidence that the King would accept a constitutional role. ● The aristocracy supported the royal approach, with backing from Austria and Prussia, suggesting external support for absolutism. ● The flight to Varennes highlighted Louis' weaknesses, intensifying opposition against him. ● Despite some revolutionary gains, social and economic distress persisted, and the King did little to address pressing issues like hunger.
Examiner Report
Good responses grasped the focus of ‘increasing’ and were able to trace the growing hostility over the period 1789ñ93. Less successful responses could have been improved by focusing on the timeframe and avoiding a narrative of the causes of the French Revolution.
My essay plan

(b) To what extent did Napoleon's reforms maintain the principles of the Revolution? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon established an autocratic regime with censorship, a police state under Fouché, and centralized decisions on war and peace. ● Opposition was carefully managed, and plebiscites were controlled. ● Equality did not extend to women, and radicals were exiled. ● Conscription and high taxes were enforced, and the economy was heavily state-controlled, maintaining an authoritarian structure. ● However, the Civil Code represented a major step forward, establishing equality before the law and abolishing the feudal system. ● Nobility and clergy privileges were eliminated, and there was a more balanced relationship between the Church and State. ● While plebiscites offered some semblance of consent, the idea of "careers open to talent" flourished, reducing corruption and incompetence in local government. ● Attention to food supply and poverty reflected a focus on essential public needs.
Examiner Report
Effective responses had a clear understanding of the question focus with appropriate references to press control, censorship and the creation of an authoritarian regime with all decisions taken by the emperor as undermining revolutionary principles. This was then set against equality before the law in the Civil Code, along with the idea of a 'career open to the talents' as showing revolutionary ideals. Very effective responses were able to provide a brief outline of revolutionary principles to assess Napoleonís actions against. Less well-focused responses provided a narrative of Napoleon's action and/or an account of his military campaigns.
My essay plan

Question 42
9389 May/June 2018 Paper 22

(a) Why was Louis XVI unwilling to accept a constitutional monarchy? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Personal stubbornness and reluctance to accept reality. ● Belief in 'Divine Right' and refusal to modify it. ● Lack of clarity in demands from below. ● Radical factions may not have accepted even a constitutional monarchy. ● Pressure from the King's entourage to resist change. ● Hope for support from his wife's relatives and foreign powers. ● Absence of tradition for constitutional monarchy in continental Europe.
Examiner Report
This was a popular question producing a wide range of responses. The best showed a good understanding of the events of 1789-92 and why the changes made during this period had little appeal to Louis. Many wrote in more general terms about Louis' weaknesses and failings. Weaker responses often did not focus on Louis very much at all and wrote generally about either events in 1789 or generic weaknesses of the Ancien Regime.
My essay plan

(b) To what extent was Napoleon a dictator? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Dominated policy-making and took key decisions on war and peace. ● Showed autocratic tendencies through censorship and a strong police force under Fouché. ● Took steps to deal with opposition and used propaganda effectively. ● Created an authoritarian regime, making himself Emperor and attempting to establish a hereditary monarchy. ● Used plebiscites to legitimize his rule, though not necessarily democratic. ● Had substantial support from the French people, demonstrated by their rallying after his escape from Elba. ● Avoided offending Catholic sensibilities and acknowledged limits to his authority. ● Maintained revolutionary gains as part of French law. ● Many changes he implemented remained after his defeat, indicating lasting popular support.
Examiner Report
Most candidates were able to write with confidence about the achievements of Napoleon, though some produced an account of only general highlights. More challenging was the issue of dictatorship and weaker answers struggled with how to differentiate between dictatorial style and other alternative interpretations of his actions. The best answers found alternative interpretations and were able to resolve the apparent conflicts in his behaviour, for example suggesting that whilst his methods were often dictatorial his motives were often based on stabilising the best achievements of the revolution.
My essay plan

Question 43
9389 May/June 2018 Paper 23

(a) Why was a Republic created in 1792? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The flight and capture of the King showed that a constitutional monarchy was not possible, leading to the abolition of the monarchy. ● The King and his supporters left no option for compromise, pushing the revolutionary movement toward radical change. ● There was no consensus on how to govern France, leaving the radical Jacobins as the only effective group. ● Acute food shortages, a breakdown of authority, ongoing war, and the September Massacres created an opportunity for a radical solution. ● The French people rejected a return to the Ancien Régime, and a republic seemed the best option to preserve revolutionary gains and offer future stability.
Examiner Report
A common approach was to outline the flaws in the Ancien Regime which, whilst it provided some useful background, was not the whole answer and certainly not in those cases that did not go much beyond 1789. Good responses concentrated on the failure of Louis to engage with the reforms introduced after 1789, culminating in his Flight to Varennes. Additionally, they looked at the effect of this on the more extreme revolutionaries and their growing popularity especially amongst the Sans Culottes. Some of the less successful answers suggested that it was the execution of Louis that created the Republic, but this actually happened several months after it was created.
My essay plan

(b) To what extent was maintaining order Napoleon's principal domestic aim? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Initially, re-establishing order after the revolutionary turmoil was a central aim, balancing the interests of both radical and conservative forces. ● He addressed potential sources of disorder, such as peasant hunger and conservative opposition to religious changes, to maintain stability. ● A centralised and effective local government system was established, with good communication between local and central authorities. ● Censorship, a strong police force, and careful management of dissent were key to maintaining order and avoiding the coups of the past. ● Some argue his ambition was for personal autocracy, creating an Empire and a hereditary monarchy for himself and his family. ● Others suggest his aim was a middle way between the Ancien Régime and the radical excesses of the early 1790s, with the Civil Code and the Concordat as examples. ● Some view his domestic policies as subordinate to his goal of creating a war machine to dominate Europe and the Middle East.
Examiner Report
Most responses demonstrated a sound knowledge of Napoleons reforms and there were some clear accounts of how these reforms helped to establish a level of stability in comparison to the upheavals of the previous decade. Stronger responses were able to suggest differences in motive behind his reforms pointing out that though some, like the Concordat, gave back some of the more stabilising elements of society, or rationalised a confusing array of reform introduced during the revolutionary period, others were more about Napoleonís personal power and re-creating a hierarchical society with Napoleon and his family at the top. Less successful answers were limited to descriptions of what Napoleon did
My essay plan

Question 44
9389 Oct/Nov 2017 Paper 21

(a) Why was Napoleon popular with the French people? [10]

Markscheme Points
● He brought stability after years of turmoil, including the execution of the King, the Terror, and the coups of the Directory period. ● As a highly successful general, he brought glory and territorial acquisitions to France. ● His excellent propaganda skills and careful management of opposition solidified his control. ● His domestic policy preserved many of the popular gains of the revolution, ensuring public support. ● The Civil Code was widely respected and provided a legal framework for equality and reform. ● The Concordat with the Papacy eased religious tensions and reassured conservatives. ● Taxation was applied more equitably, and there were significant improvements in areas like education.
Examiner Report
Many excellent responses explained the reasons for Napoleon's popularity with the French people through references to his military successes restoring French national pride, his improvement in relations with the Catholic Church through the Concordat pleasing the majority of French people, who were Catholics, and the introduction of the Civil Code giving legal sanction to some of the important developments of the 1790s (e.g. abolition of feudalism). More limited responses could have been improved by avoiding a narrative of Napoleonís actions with no link to causation
My essay plan

(b) 'Social and economic factors provide the best explanation for government instability between 1789 and 1795.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Economic causes like the inequality of taxation and the burden of the national debt were central to instability, triggering dissatisfaction among the Third Estate. ● Hunger and deprivation among the poor often led to mobs that played a critical role in revolutionary events. ● Resentment of privilege by the Third Estate and the refusal of the monarchy and the privileged estates to compromise escalated tensions. ● Poverty and economic aspiration acted as fuels for unrest rather than direct causes. Other factors: ● The Revolutionary War destabilized the nation and exacerbated existing divisions. ● Policies like the Jacobin Terror and uprisings such as the war in the Vendée heightened instability. ● France's rigidly hierarchical society fostered resentment, with many regions displaying deep hatred for the aristocracy and the Church. ● Louis XVI's incompetence and duplicity, exemplified by the flight to Varennes, destroyed trust and made compromise unattainable. ● The lack of consensus among political elites on governance deepened divisions, making lasting stability elusive.
Examiner Report
The more effective responses were able to analyse the role of social factors, such as the burdens placed upon the Third Estate, along with economic factors, such as government debt, in creating political instability in the period. This was then balanced with an analysis of how other factors, such as Louis XVI's lack of political skill, the flight to Varennes, and growing radicalism within France further created political instability. Less successful responses tended to describe events rather than analysing their relative significance with explicit reference to the requirements of the question. As a result, these responses produced narrative accounts of the causes and development of the French Revolution within the period.
My essay plan

Question 45
9389 Oct/Nov 2017 Paper 22

(a) Why did the Directory fall? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The Directory failed to address France's political, social, and economic problems effectively. ● It struggled with war, counter-revolutionary threats, and frequent coups, undermining stability. ● No consensus emerged on how to govern France in a way that satisfied the majority. ● Napoleon's ambition, military success, and popular appeal positioned him as a strong alternative. ● His brother's assistance and precise timing ensured the success of the coup.
Examiner Report
This question was generally well answered. Many candidates showed a good understanding of general problems facing any government in France at this stage of the Revolution as well as the specific weaknesses of this particular manifestation of ‘revolutionary’ government. A few weaker answers were confused about the difference between Robespierreís rule and that of the Directory, and some did not fully understand Napoleon’s role at this stage of the Revolution, suggesting he was one of the Directors.
My essay plan

(b) 'Internal divisions were the main reason why the counter-revolutionaries failed between 1789 and 1795.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Internal divisions among opponents of the revolution weakened their efforts, with no agreement on objectives (restoration of the Ancien Régime or a constitutional monarchy). ● The King's incompetence and eventual execution undermined the monarchy's cause and boosted republicanism. ● Opponents were often associated with Austria and Prussia, appearing treasonous and countering rising nationalism. ● Many monarchists became neutral, especially regarding the war, due to lack of clear leadership on the 'right.' ● Deep hostility to the Ancien Régime and its failures fueled determination to prevent its return. ● Social and economic crises made reverting to the past unappealing for many. ● Revolutionary ideas, despite their radicalism, had widespread appeal, aligning with strong nationalist sentiments.
Examiner Report
Good answers were able to identify possible groups who were against the revolution and explain why they were unsuccessful, either specifically or generally - the failure of the king to provide leadership and direction being a common theme of successful responses. Weaker answers often described in general terms why there was a revolution, and why the monarchy ended in 1792, and/or the effects of the Reign of Terror. They were often unclear about what counterrevolutionary meant.
My essay plan

Question 44

9389 Oct/Nov 2017 Paper 23

(a) Why was there a 'terror' in France between 1792 and 1794? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Beginnings of radicalism linked to events like the Bastille attack and the September 1792 prison massacres. ● Fear of external threats, including Austrian invasion and British attacks in the Channel and Mediterranean. ● Anti-Jacobin uprisings in the regions and growing confidence among Counter-Revolutionaries. ● Key cities like Lyons and Toulon breaking away, prompting a need for decisive action to preserve revolutionary gains. ● Pressure from the sans-culottes on the Committee of Public Safety for firm measures. ● Influential roles of Robespierre and Fouché in implementing radical policies.
Examiner Report
This was quite a popular question and on the whole candidates had a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the events in France in the early 1790s. What distinguished the good from the less successful was the difference between describing the things that happened and explaining their consequences. Less successful candidates tended to give an account of the terror or of what went immediately before; better answers were able to show how specific factors increased tensions and how a specific combination of factors produced the terror
My essay plan

(b) ‘An enlightened dictator.’ Assess this view of Napoleon [20]

Markscheme Points
● Abolished worst aspects of Ancien Régime with fair taxation and equality before the law. ● Introduced Civil Code, improved education, and ensured administrative competence. ● Concordat ensured religious tolerance and reduced hunger. ● Used censorship, plebiscites, and oppressive policing under Fouché. ● Intolerant of opposition and made unilateral war decisions. ● Policies mixed enlightenment with authoritarian rule.
Examiner Report
Most candidates demonstrated reasonable levels of knowledge about Napoleon. Less successful answers took a narrative approach, but better answers built a case for and against Napoleon as a dictator, while the best evaluated Napoleonís achievement by focusing on the key word: enlightened. Moderate responses tended to concentrate on dictator which was only part of the question, though they were often able to build a case for and against the idea of Napoleon as a dictator. The most successful candidates were able to link this to enlightened ideas as expressed through the revolution.
My essay plan

Question 45
9389 May/June 2017 Paper 21

(a) Why did the Jacobins fail to retain power? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The broader challenges of economic, political, and constitutional issues made consensus difficult after 1789 ● Reaching a viable system of government was a significant challenge for all revolutionary rulers ● The Jacobins were divided between moderate and radical factions ● They were seen as too radical by many, especially with their stance on de-Christianisation ● The Jacobins were also caught in the 'Paris v. the provinces' divide, which alienated some parts of France ● The Terror, largely attributed to the Jacobins, was divisive and unpopular ● The leadership within the Jacobins was often divided, weakening their effectiveness ● They lacked the power to enforce their will across all of France
Examiner Report
Many excellent responses were able to refer to the radicalism of the Jacobins as alienating the majority of people in France, as seen in the Terror and the Cult of the Supreme Being. Other candidates could have improved their response by avoiding a narrative of Jacobin actions with no link to causation
My essay plan

(b) 'The failings of the Directory explain Napoleon's rise to power.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● The Directory was marked by coups and instability at both central and regional levels ● It struggled to establish an effective system of government and failed to resolve the link between the executive and legislature ● The royalists were not effectively managed ● Issues like the currency were problematic ● It became increasingly authoritarian, moving away from revolutionary ideals ● War added to its challenges and it was viewed as a temporary solution ● It could never satisfy both radicals and conservatives ● Napoleon's timing was perfect, bolstered by his strong military reputation ● He positioned himself as the consolidator of the Revolution, avoiding the perception of being too radical ● Lucien, his brother, played a crucial role in the power seizure ● The speed at which Napoleon introduced a new Constitution helped present him as a solution to instability
Examiner Report
The more effective responses were able to analyse the failings of the Directory, failed coups and instability in the regions. This was then balanced with an analysis of the ways Napoleon exploited the situation, using his military reputation and the manoeuvrings of his brother. Most responses were based around description of the Directoryís action, alongside narrative accounts of Napoleonís actions.
My essay plan

Question 46
9389 May/June 2017 Paper 22

(a) Why was the Code Napoleon introduced? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The Revolution destroyed the old feudal system and outdated laws ● Napoleon created a uniform and effective legal system for all of France ● Seen as his greatest legacy, aligning with his view of being 'heir to the Revolution' ● Much of it still exists in France and influenced territories colonized by France and other European countries conquered by Napoleon ● Ended feudalism and privilege based on birth alone ● Enshrined Revolution ideas in law, granting freedom of worship and promoting merit-based advancement ● Improved French civil and criminal law ● Established the principle of equality (for men) under the law ● The system was popular among many people
Examiner Report
Good responses came from those who knew that it was just the codification of the laws to create a single legal system for the whole of France. Some candidates seemed to think that the Code Napoleon meant all of Napoleonís reforms and answered accordingly. It is not clear why a significant number of candidates felt they needed to include educational, economic and other reforms but it led to significant weakening of some otherwise very competent answers. Good candidates were able to explain several factors and the best responses were able to justify some sort of prioritisation of these factors.
My essay plan

(b) Assess the reasons why France was no longer a constitutional monarchy by 1793. [20]

Markscheme Points
● No tradition of constitutional monarchy in France, unlike in England ● The implications of constitutional monarchy were not fully understood in France ● The monarchy lacked enthusiasm for the idea, with autocracy still supported by many ● Louis XVI perceived as an incompetent ruler, indecisive, and untrustworthy ● Political, social, and economic divisions remained in France, making the untried system unlikely to solve issues ● Growing movement in Paris (Sans Culottes, Jacobins) advocating for the abolition of the monarchy
Examiner Report
There were some good responses that set the failings of the king against the rise of republicanism and the effect of increasing international conflict to produce a reasoned account and, in better answers, an effective judgement on relative importance of different factors. Some candidates did not understand the significance of ëconstitutionalí monarchy ñ that it was effectively the first constitutional experiment following the outbreak of the revolution. A lot of essays included extensive accounts of the failure of the Ancien Regime. Equally, some did not understand that the constitutional monarchy ended when it was abolished by the National Convention on 21st September 1792 and that therefore the kingís execution, in January 1793, is not a reason for its termination. Nor were the harsh measures adopted by the Jacobin relevant to the question.
My essay plan

Question 47
9389 May/June 2017 Paper 23

(a) Why did the aims of the French revolutionaries change in the period from 1789 to 1793?

Markscheme Points
● King's refusal to compromise or consider a constitutional monarchy ● The flight to Varennes and the perception of treason ● The role of Marie Antoinette and the court in exacerbating tensions ● The backdrop of war heightening nationalistic feelings and conflicting loyalties ● Conflicting political views, from modest reform to radical change ● Rapidly changing social and economic conditions across France adding to instability
Examiner Report
Most candidates were able to outline some of the key changes in the aims of the revolutionaries from the basic overhaul of perceived weaknesses of the Ancien Regime to the demand for the establishment of a republic. Better answers were able to effectively establish the contextual circumstances that led to these changes; factors including Louisís failure to support moderate changes and his flight to Varennes linked with suspicion of overseas plots and continued hardship, leading to a rise in extreme republicanism were the basis for effective explanations. Weaker responses were limited to a description what happened between 1789 and 1793.
My essay plan

(b) 'Napoleon remained in power because he was not a revolutionary.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Kept revolutionary reforms like Napoleonic Code and tax equality ● Made peace with the Church through Concordat ● Provided stability and protected bourgeoisie interests ● Gained glory for France through military victories ● Used plebiscites and propaganda to legitimize rule ● Tightened control with censorship and local authority ● His regime similar to Ancien Régime in some aspects
Examiner Report
A common feature of answers was to set up an obvious contrast between the two alternatives; Napoleon as the embodiment of revolutionary principles versus Napoleon as the antithesis of revolution. Some took this route successfully, demonstrating how Napoleon integrated aspects of the revolutionary changes into his administration, then showing how much of Napoleonís style of government went against the principles of the Revolution. An interesting alternative was to argue that it was not about the revolution at all, but about Napoleonís popularity and personal appeal so that he could incorporate both revolutionary and non-revolutionary principles into his regime and win support from all sides. Less successful responses simply provided a description of how Napoleon governed France.
My essay plan

Question 49
9389 Oct/Nov 2016 Paper 21

(a) Why was the Estates General called in 1789? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Failure of ministers and the monarchy to address financial problems ● Dismissal of ministers like Calonne and Brienne ● Parlement and Assembly of Notables failed to find solutions ● Social and economic crisis worsening, with rural distress ● Breakdown of authority in urban areas like Grenoble ● Foreign policy crisis in the Netherlands ● Bankruptcy and loss of credit in France ● Estates General seen as necessary for new taxes and reforms
Examiner Report
Most candidates were able to demonstrate some understanding of the huge social, financial, political and national security issues which confronted France in 1789. The most impressive responses explained these problems in depth, with specific factual evidence, showing how all previous attempts to deal with them had failed and how summoning the Estates General was increasingly perceived as the only practical solution. Less successful responses tended to lack such depth, many of them being over-reliant on generalisations which were largely undeveloped and often unsupported.
My essay plan

(b) 'A great reformer.' How far do you agree with this view of Napoleon? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Civil Code ended Ancien Régime and brought fairer legal system ● Feudalism abolished and key revolutionary elements maintained ● Concordat provided a solution to church-state issues ● Tolerance for all religions promoted ● Prefect system improved local administration ● Fairer taxation and gradual emergence of equality before the law ● Economic development and infrastructure improvements (roads, waterways) ● Attempts to benefit all, not just the elite ● Authoritarian regime with growing autocracy and censorship ● Conscription unpopular, damaging rural economy ● Motivation for reforms seen as power consolidation and imperial ambitions
Examiner Report
Lack of balance was a characteristic of less successful responses to this question, the majority of which were essentially narrative in approach. Most candidates described the various reforms which Napoleon carried out, concluding that, therefore, he was indeed 'a great reformer'. The most effective responses were more analytical in style, considering the motives behind, and the implications of, Napoleon's reforms rather than simply outlining their content. This enabled the development of fully-focused arguments and more convincing conclusions.
My essay plan

Question 50
9389 Oct/Nov 2016 Paper 22

(a) Explain why there were many coups in France between 1795 and 1799. [10]

Markscheme Points
● Background of war and insecurity led to instability ● Country unused to democracy and faced too many opponents ● Legacy of the Terror and destruction of traditional authority ● Jacobins created little after their destruction ● Vast social and economic changes created challenges ● Difficulty in finding compromise between Ancien Régime and radicalism ● Press freedom fueled radicalism, no regime gained legitimacy ● Widespread voting among inexperienced electorate ● Harsh winter of 1794-95 and poor harvests in 1795-96 added to crisis ● Lack of economic controls or relief systems
Examiner Report
Successful responses focused on the requirements of the question, demonstrating detailed understanding of the instability confronting the Directory as a result of both internal and external factors. Some less successful answers tended to describe some of the coups which occurred, with limited explicit focus on their underlying causes. As a result, they tended to be narrative rather than analytical in approach. A significantly large number of responses were adversely affected by chronological confusion. For example, some candidates wrote exclusively about the development of the French Revolution up to the execution of the King, while others described the actions taken by Napoleon once he had become Emperor.
My essay plan

(b) 'Hunger was the main cause of political instability between 1789 and 1795.' How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Hunger and poor harvests were key factors in unrest, especially linked to bread prices ● Popular unrest was often politically driven by the hungry population ● Middle-class anger towards the Ancien Régime amplified by the mob's influence ● Arthur Young's quote emphasizes the link between bread prices and revolution ● The need to pacify the countryside drove many events between 1789-95 ● The King's actions before his execution worsened the situation, preventing a constitutional monarchy ● The divided Left and growing royalist opposition added to instability ● War and invasion threats contributed to the tense environment ● Deep social divisions further fueled unrest ● Failure to create a government that could accommodate diverse views ● Destruction of institutions like the Church left a vacuum, worsening the crisis ● Local government breakdown persisted until the Directory ● Some historians view the crisis as personality-driven rather than solely structural
Examiner Report
As in Part (a), less successful responses tended to describe events rather than analysing their relative significance with explicit reference to the requirements of the question. As a result, these responses were restricted to narrative accounts of the causes and development of the French Revolution within the period, reference to the importance of hunger being largely confined to generalised and undeveloped assertions. The most successful responses, while deploying much the same factual content as their evidence, were more explicitly focused and analytical in approach, enabling the development of balanced and well-reasoned arguments
My essay plan

Question 51
9389 Oct/Nov 2016 Paper 23

(a) Why did the flight to Varennes provoke such a strong reaction? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The King's flight signified the end of the constitutional monarchy experiment ● His attempt to flee to foreign lands raised suspicions of treason ● The flight highlighted the King's insincerity and distrust of the revolution's gains ● Growing royalist faction aimed to restore the Ancien Régime with foreign support ● King's actions led to his suspension from office and the acceleration of émigré flight ● Rising tensions contributed to violent events like the Champ de Mars bloodshed ● The flight triggered further radicalism and solidified the belief that only extreme measures could resolve France's governance issues
Examiner Report
The most successful responses were characterised by clearly expressed understanding of the highly significant constitutional implications of the King's attempted flight, the threat which it posed to revolutionary achievements and the reasons why it fostered greater radicalism within France. Less successful responses tended to lack such focused analytical depth, consisting largely of descriptive accounts of the flight itself and the subsequent capture and execution of the King. This narrative approach meant that reference to the requirements of the question tended to be implicit only.
My essay plan

(b) ‘Bringing stability to France was Napoleonís greatest domestic achievement.’ How far do you agree? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon’s ability to respond to French people's needs after years of turmoil was exceptional ● France sought stability, and Napoleon provided a solution that balanced revolution, anarchy, and autocracy ● His regime laid a foundation that lasted for decades, despite leaning towards autocracy ● Major achievements included the Civil Code, Concordat, and reforms in education, taxation, and administration ● The Code replaced feudal laws with a lasting judicial system ● The Concordat restored the Church’s role, providing social stability ● He blended authoritarian traditions with revolutionary ideas, gaining popularity and loyalty
Examiner Report
Candidates generally were able to display sound knowledge of Napoleon’s rise to power and the policies/reforms which he implemented in his capacity as First Consul and, subsequently, Emperor. Most argued (or at least implied) that Napoleon did indeed bring stability to a France which had suffered due to the excesses of autocracy and radicalism. Less successful responses did not consider whether this was his ‘greatest domestic achievement’, however, and therefore tended to be unbalanced. The most effective responses were characterised by a genuine attempt to develop a viable counter-argument. A significantly large number of candidates changed the focus of the question by debating whether Napoleon’s motives were designed for the benefit of France or to further his own dictatorial ambitions. Some candidates, misinterpreting the demands of the question, compared the effectiveness of Napoleon’s domestic and foreign policies.
My essay plan

Question 52
9389 May/June 2016 Paper 21

(a) Why was Napoleon able to become First Consul? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The French were tired of political instability and “rule by coup” ● The election of royalist deputies in 1797 raised concerns about the revolution’s gains ● The 1798 election results fueled anxiety, which Napoleon capitalized on ● His military success, in contrast to failures elsewhere, added to his appeal ● A free press sparked radicalism, fueling desire for stability and authoritarianism ● Napoleon’s excellent timing, propaganda skills, and understanding of the political situation were key ● The collaboration with Sieyès provided strong constitutional support
Examiner Report
Most candidates were able to refer to Napoleon’s perceived success as a military commander, his astute use of propaganda and his growing popularity with the French people. The most impressive responses went beyond these rather generalised factors, for example by analysing the role of Sieyes and demonstrating the significance of post-revolutionary governments’ failure to provide stability. A number of candidates, misinterpreting the requirements of the question, described how Napoleon became Emperor and/or the reforms he instituted in that role
My essay plan

(b) To what extent were Robespierre and the Jacobins responsible for the political instability in France between 1789 and 1795? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Radicalism alienated moderates and fueled counter-revolutionary sentiment ● The Terror caused chaos and hindered common ground for reform ● The King's attitude and actions made a constitutional settlement almost impossible ● Active opposition to change from those loyal to the Ancien Régime ● Austria and Prussia's opposition to revolution played a significant role ● Widespread hunger and social unrest intensified instability ● Differences between Paris and the regions contributed to the challenge ● Given France's immense social, economic, and political problems in 1789, stability seemed unlikely
Examiner Report
Most responses were confined to narrative/descriptive accounts of the actions taken by the Jacobin government, most notably the ‘Reign of Terror’, concluding that these radical measures were entirely responsible for the political instability in France. More effective responses were able to analyse the impact of Jacobin rule in the context of the social, political and economic problems which faced France in 1789, facilitating a more balanced approach to the question. Weak responses were characterised by over-reliance on vague and generalised assertions.
My essay plan

Question 53
9389 May/June 2016 Paper 22

(a) Why did the Jacobins oppose Louis XVI? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Wanted leadership of the revolutionary process, moving away from the Estates General/National Assembly ● Primarily democrats and parliamentarians, aiming for a constitutional settlement ● Patriotic and egalitarian, focused on protecting revolution gains ● Willing to use force and radical methods to safeguard the revolution ● Anti-Christian for some, anti-clerical for others, with a radical core ● Execution of the monarchy was a key goal for many, imposed on others ● United by the desire to end the Ancien Régime and create a more egalitarian society
Examiner Report
The most impressive responses were fully-focused on the precise requirements of the question, providing detailed analysis of the ways in which Louis XVI's monarchy clashed with the aims and aspirations of Jacobin supporters. Less successful responses tended to concentrate on the perceived weaknesses and failings of Louis XVI, commonly supported by lengthy passages of narrative. This approach, while clearly of implicit relevance, dealt with reasons for opposition to Louis XVI generally, rather than the views of the Jacobins specifically.
My essay plan

(b) To what extent did the Directory 'abandon the revolution'? [20]

Markscheme Points
● The Directory is often accused of chaos but built on the achievements of 1791–2 ● Managed to make democratic institutions work for a time, which was remarkable given the context ● Did not intend to reverse progress, aiming for constitutionalism ● Broad franchise, wider than Britain or the Netherlands, with frequent elections and free press ● Introduced more egalitarian financial administration than the Ancien Régime ● Improved local movement and implemented sensible tax-raising ideas ● Made strong efforts to make constitutionalism work, despite challenges ● Coups and authoritarian methods damaged their reputation, but might be a criticism of the regime that followed
Examiner Report
The majority of responses addressed the topic rather than the question. Based on sound knowledge of the Directory, most candidates provided narrative/descriptive accounts of its composition, actions and eventual replacement by Napoleon. Consideration of the extent to which the Directory upheld or abandoned the revolution was generally confined to undeveloped assertions in conclusions. The most effective responses were explicitly focused on the requirements of the question throughout, detailed analysis of appropriate factual evidence facilitating the development of well-reasoned and sustained arguments
My essay plan

Question 54
9389 May/June 2016 Paper 23

(a) Why was the Directory established in 1795? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Aimed to solve problems after the Ancien Régime, King's execution, and the Terror ● Focused on survival and defending gains of the 1791–92 period ● Sought consensus among conflicting groups, including Jacobins and monarchists ● Desired an acceptable constitutional settlement for a workable democratic system ● Aimed to ensure the system's survival against hostile foreign powers
Examiner Report
That the Directory was established to restore some form of stability to France after the failings of Louis XVI and the excesses of Jacobin rule was widely understood. Weaker answers showed a tendency to drift into unfocused narrative regarding the structure of the Directory, the problems it faced and the reasons why it was unable to achieve its primary aim. The most impressive responses remained fully-focused on the requirements of the question throughout, analysing the problems facing France which the Directory was established to address. Weak responses were generally the result of confusion, some candidates, for example, assuming that the Directory was established by Napoleon following his coup.
My essay plan

(b) 'It was caused by taxes.' How far do you agree with this view of the French Revolution? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Taxation was a major issue, leading to France's bankruptcy and the summoning of the Estates General ● Corruption, inefficiency, and unfair exemptions in the Ancien Régime system contributed to its downfall ● Louis and the monarchists' reluctance to support significant change was a key factor ● Other factors include deep social inequalities, a growing but powerless bourgeoisie, hunger, anti-capitalist culture, and the personal failings of the elite
Examiner Report
The most successful responses were characterised by detailed analysis of the inequalities and inefficiencies of the taxation system, contrasted against a range of other factors which also led to revolution in France. This approach enabled candidates to develop balanced arguments which explicitly addressed the requirements of the question. Answers lower down the mark range, while containing much the same factual information, tended to be narrative accounts addressing a more general question regarding the causes of the French Revolution. As a result, they lacked focused analysis
My essay plan

Question 55
9389 Oct/Nov 2015 Paper 21

(a) Why did the Directory come to power in France? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Reaction against excesses of the Terror and extreme radicalism, like dechristianisation ● Failure of the constitutional monarchy and inability of Robespierre and Jacobins to provide legitimate government ● Directory aimed to find a middle ground between authoritarianism and radicalism ● Leaders of the Directory part of the 'new order,' seeking to preserve early Revolutionary gains ● Focus on offering greater stability during domestic and foreign conflict
Examiner Report
There was enormous diversity in the quality of responses to this question. The best answers were based on detailed understanding of the context in which the Director came to power in France, and were able to identify, explain and analyse a range of valid causal factors. The majority of responses adopted an essentially narrative approach, describing the structures adopted by the Directory and outlining some of its actions while in power. As a result, there was only limited (and usually only implicit) reference to the actual requirements of the question. The weakest responses, of which there were a relatively large number, were the result of factual confusion and inaccuracy. For example, several candidates assumed that the Directory was the government of Robespierre, while others wrote about Napoleon's rise to power as First Consul.
My essay plan

(b) How far would you agree that Louis XVI was responsible for the political crises between 1789 and 1793? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Louis ignored social and economic failings of the Ancien Régime, leading to the crisis of 1789 ● His ambivalence towards constitutionalism and failure to build trust were key factors ● Poor treatment of ministers like Necker and his handling of the Estates General ● His willingness to use force, support for hardliners, and reaction to the Bastille ● The Court's role, his wages, and the final flight and dealings with foreign powers ● However, many forces were beyond his control, including deep-rooted social and economic issues from the Ancien Régime
Examiner Report
In general, responses to this question were significantly better than those for Part (a). While there was a tendency to describe rather than analyse, most candidates were able to provide sufficient appropriate and accurate factual detail to sustain the development of viable arguments. The majority of responses, which focused almost entirely on ways in which Louis XVI could be seen as responsible for the political problems facing France, would, however, have benefitted from a more balanced assessment of the evidence. The best responses were characterised by a genuine attempt to evaluate Louis XVI's culpability in the context of other issues over which he had no real control.
My essay plan

Question 56
9389 Oct/Nov 2015 Paper 22

(a) Why did Napoleon become Emperor in 1804? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon's success as a general, especially in Italy, brought glory and prestige to France ● His freedom of action and decision-making on a national scale, especially in dealings with Austria ● The discrediting of the Directory and fear of the return of the Terror created a power vacuum ● Coups like 18 Fructidor V undermined the regime's stability ● Napoleon's boldness, military support, and backing from his brother Lucien were crucial ● He promised to retain key gains of the Revolution, appealing to public sentiment for stability ● His "benevolent" despotism offered the stability France needed after years of turmoil
Examiner Report
Candidates clearly possessed good, and often very detailed, knowledge about Napoleon, but many found it difficult to apply this to the precise requirements of the question. Many responses outlined how and why Napoleon initially rose to power in France, rather than specifically why he decided to adopt the title of Emperor in 1804. Others described how he became Emperor rather than why. The best responses, of which there were relatively few, explained and analysed a range of appropriate factors which were fully focused on Napoleon's motives in 1804.
My essay plan

(b) 'It provided effective government for France.' Assess this view of the Directory. [20]

Markscheme Points
● The Directory provided stability after the Terror, balancing anarchy and autocracy ● The Constitution of 1795 was a remarkable document, achieving a fragile consensus in turbulent times ● The Directory introduced democratic institutions, elections, and a relatively radical franchise ● A broad electorate and a free press were significant achievements for the era ● The government managed to successfully wage war, establish a sensible taxation system, and create local administration ● Despite its successes, the Directory faced opposition from Jacobins, royalists, émigrés, the Church, and foreign powers ● It was eventually undermined by coups and lost power to the military, highlighting its instability
Examiner Report
There were a number of excellent responses to this question. Based on an analytical approach, supported by appropriate and accurate factual detail, these responses were characterised by the development of fully focused and balanced arguments, leading to well-reasoned conclusions. The majority of responses, while often containing similar factual information and offering evidence to both support and challenge the statement, required greater depth of evaluation in order to reach an effective judgement. Weaker responses, of which there were relatively few, resulted from inadequate factual knowledge or confusion regarding the nature of the Directory. Some candidates, for example, wrote about the ineffectiveness of Louis XVI's government, while others described Napoleon's actions as First Consul.
My essay plan

Question 57
9389 Oct/Nov 2015 Paper 23

(a) Account for the failure of the counter-revolutionaries in France between 1789 and 1795. [10]

Markscheme Points
● Localism prevented the formation of a coherent national counter-revolutionary movement ● Disunity among potential allies of the counter-revolution, making collaboration difficult ● Lack of leadership after the King's death hindered efforts for restoration ● The flight and perceived treason of the émigrés alienated potential supporters ● The Terror weakened and deterred many counter-revolutionary supporters ● Many were determined for the Revolution to succeed, with bad memories of the Ancien Régime limiting support for a restoration ● Positive gains, especially in 1791, led many to resist returning to the old order
Examiner Report
The most effective responses were characterised by clear understanding of who the counterrevolutionaries were and detailed explanation of a range of factors which account for their failure during the period. The majority of responses tended to focus almost exclusively on the actions of the king, frequently with only implicit relevance to the requirements of the question. Weaker responses tended to provide narrative accounts of the French Revolution, with no explicit reference to counter-revolutionaries or the problems they faced.
My essay plan

(b) To what extent was Napoleon's military ability the main reason for his rise to power by 1799? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon's military success in Italy and his public returns of loot to France enhanced his prestige ● His military campaigns brought glory to France, increasing his popularity ● He had gained considerable freedom in decision-making, particularly with Austria, which showcased his ability to take charge ● The instability in the Directory and the conflicts between executive and legislative powers created a power vacuum ● The royalist victories in the 1797 elections and the fear of a return to the Terror discredited the Directory ● France's history of authoritarian rule and the desire for stability made Napoleon's rise more appealing ● Napoleon used propaganda effectively to bolster his image and cloak his true ambitions ● His boldness, military backing, and the support of his brother Lucien were key factors in his seizure of power
Examiner Report
While there were some excellent responses to this question, the majority would have benefitted from greater depth and balance. Napoleon's military campaigns were commonly described, in varying degrees of accuracy, but frequently without detailed explanation of the part that these played in his rise to power. Many candidates, in an attempt to achieve a sense of balance, made reference to the policies and strategies which Napoleon employed once in power, thereby straying outside the timeframe established by the question. The most effective responses achieved balance by analysing the problems which confronted the Directory and the ways in which Napoleon was able to exploit its weaknesses.
My essay plan

Question 59
9389 May/June 2015 Paper 21

(a) Why did France go to war in 1792? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Political inexperience among key revolutionary figures played a major role in France's decision to go to war in 1792, as many sought to make a name for themselves. ● The Declaration at Pillnitz, issued by Austria and Prussia, increased tensions by threatening military intervention if the monarchy was threatened. ● Activities of the émigrés, who were plotting against the Revolution from abroad, further fueled the crisis. ● A perceived threat of invasion by Prussia and Austria, combined with fears of foreign intervention, contributed to the war decision. ● The role of the King and the Court was significant, as they encouraged an aggressive foreign policy to further their own interests, including counter-revolutionary efforts. ● Ultimately, France's own aggression, stemming from revolutionary ideals and a desire to spread the Revolution, was the main catalyst for war.
Examiner Report
Candidates needed to identify and explain an appropriate range of causal factors to fully answer this question. Many responses did not explore this full range and focused on a single cause, that France went to war because it feared invasion by other European countries. A significantly large number of candidates interpreted the word ‘war’ as meaning ‘civil war’, and confined their answers to generalised information regarding the causes of the French Revolution. In general, this question was not well answered.
My essay plan

(b) How successfully did Napoleon govern France between 1799 and 1804? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Brought law, order, and political stability after Revolution ● Concordat (1801) reconciled Church with state ● Civil Code standardized legal system, protected property rights ● Prefect system centralized control, reduced local corruption ● Authoritarian rule with tight control over press and limited freedoms ● Harsh treatment of former royalists and opposition ● Continental System had mixed success, hurt France's economy ● Many of his reforms endured after his rule
Examiner Report
Candidates generally possessed sound knowledge of Napoleon's policies, although many found it difficult to confine their answers to the period between 1799 and 1804. The most effective responses were clearly focused on the key issue of how successfully Napoleon governed France, with balanced assessment leading to the development of well constructed arguments. The majority of responses tended to describe issues such as the Code and the Concordat, focus on the actual question being confined to conclusions, often in the form of unexplained assertions. The weakest responses were assertive throughout and were the result of inadequate factual knowledge.
My essay plan

Question 60
9389 May/June 2015 Paper 22

(a) Account for the fall of Robespierre and the Jacobins. [10]

Markscheme Points
● The Terror alienated many, causing fear and instability ● Costly war added to internal tensions ● Extremism led to a reaction for more stability ● Committee of Public Safety became distrusted ● Constant social upheaval and influence of sans-culottes worried the middle class ● High bread prices increased public dissatisfaction ● Dechristianisation alienated large parts of the population ● Government splits deepened the crisis ● The direction of the Revolution was increasingly challenged
Examiner Report
The majority of responses focused on what Robespierre and the Jacobins actually did while in power, followed by the unexplained/unsupported assertion that this is why they fell. In many cases, factual content was restricted to coverage of the ‘reign of terror’. More effective responses were based on a wider range of factors, together with clear understanding of how they combined to lead to the eventual collapse of the Jacobin regime. The weakest responses were characterised by factual inaccuracy and chronological confusion.
My essay plan

(b) To what extent was Louis XVI responsible for his own downfall? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Louis' failure to compromise and recognize revolutionary forces ● Inconsistent approach to constitutionalism weakened his position ● Mistrust grew due to his flights and the declaration ● Requesting foreign support was politically disastrous ● Leadership was weak, offering no alternative to republicans ● Political consensus was nearly impossible due to the demand for change ● The Ancien Régime was too entrenched to reform peacefully ● Socio-economic structure was resistant to change without violence ● Poor harvests and the war worsened tensions
Examiner Report
There were some excellent responses, characterised by well supported assessment of Louis XVI's own weaknesses and errors, balanced against factors over which he had little control and could not realistically be held responsible for. The majority of responses tended to lack such balance, generally focusing on Louis' own culpability; while appropriate evidence was often used to support this view, there was little attempt to consider a counter-argument. While the most impressive responses analysed the effectiveness of Louis' kingship throughout his reign, the majority tended to focus on events after 1789, by which time, it could be argued, his downfall had already taken place. It was clear that many candidates had interpreted 'downfall' as meaning 'execution', thereby narrowing the range of evidence which might be used to develop a convincing argument.
My essay plan

Question 61
9389 May/June 2015 Paper 23

(a) Why did Louis XVI attempt to flee from France in 1791? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Louis was insincere about accepting the Constitution ● He opposed the direction of the Revolutionary process ● The influence of his wife may have been significant ● Limited encouragement from foreign monarchs who could be seen as potential allies ● Incompetence in planning and execution of the flight ● No clear objective behind the flight, showing poor decision-making ● Likely hoped to return with a victorious army, but unrealistic in 1791
Examiner Report
The most effective responses were characterised by in-depth explanation and analysis of a wide range of factors which led to Louis XVI's failed attempt to leave France in 1791. The majority of candidates adopted a more narrative approach, describing the revolution itself and the king's removal from power; as a result, focus on Louis' reasons for attempting to flee from France in 1791 became largely implicit only. Weaker responses tended to describe the 'flight to Varennes' and the implications/outcome of it, rather than addressing the key issue of why it occurred.
My essay plan

(b) 'Political instability in France between 1789 and 1795 was caused by economic problems.' How far do you agree with this view? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Legacy of the Ancien Régime led to unstable foundations ● Centuries of authoritarian rule with no tradition of alternative governance ● Social and economic problems, such as rising bread prices, fueled unrest ● The King's role contributed to instability due to indecision and lack of compromise ● The military and aristocracy played significant destabilizing roles ● No consensus on governance and conflicting ideas on how France should be ruled ● Foreign intervention added to tensions ● Idealism of the Revolution often clashed with the lack of practical experience in governance
Examiner Report
The most impressive responses were fully focused on the reasons why France experienced political instability between 1789 and 1795, and the extent to which economic problems were the main issue. Balanced assessment of appropriately selected evidence enabled the development of well constructed and convincing arguments. The majority of candidates wrote more generally about the French Revolution, so that reference to the precise requirements of the question was implicit at best. A common feature of many responses was a tendency to drift outside the established timeframe
My essay plan

Question 62
9389 Oct/Nov 2014 Paper 21

(a) Why did the Estates General fail to solve France's problems? [10]

Markscheme Points
● France faced uncertainty about procedure for convening the Estates General, last meeting in 1614. ● The Estates General represented three groups: clergy, nobility, and others. ● Serious disagreements over voting procedures and how decisions should be made. ● Finance was a major problem, and the cahiers showed contradictory solutions. ● Louis XVI offered a conciliatory procedure, but it was rejected by the Third Estate. ● The Third Estate declared itself the National Assembly, claiming the right to decide on taxation. ● The National Assembly's challenge to the King, combined with Louis' indecisiveness, led to disorder (e.g., fall of the Bastille). ● Louis XVI suspected of using soldiers to crush opposition. ● The National Assembly became the Constituent Assembly. ● The attempt to solve problems through the Estates General had failed.
Examiner Report
Virtually all candidates were able to display sound knowledge of the composition of the Estates General and the negative impact which this had on its ability to make agreed decisions. The most impressive responses went beyond these general points, outlining specific problems which confronted France and explaining why the Estates General was unable to find practical solutions to them. Other responses would have benefited from greater range and depth.
My essay plan

(b) How far did Napoleon show himself to be 'the son of the Revolution' as First Consul from 1799 to 1804? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon came to power in 1799 with strong credentials: a successful general and defender of revolutionary ideals. ● He defended the Revolution against its enemies, maintaining his reputation even after restoring order for the Directory. ● As First Consul, his policies aligned with revolutionary ideals, and he used plebiscites for popular consent, though managed carefully. ● Unlike monarchy or Robespierre's dictatorship, there were three consuls, but Napoleon dominated power in practice. ● The Tribune and Council of State existed in theory, but in reality, Napoleon controlled them by choosing members directly or indirectly. ● Under his centralised authority, local officials merely implemented his policies. ● The Code Napoleon promoted reforms that seemed aligned with revolutionary ideals. ● The Concordat with the Pope restored Catholic Church relations while ending its privileged position, correcting the Jacobins' anti-Christian stance. ● Napoleon's policies were seen as a return to traditional roles for women, reversing some revolutionary improvements. ● He distanced himself from Jacobin ties, presenting himself as a moderate reformer continuing the Revolution's best features. ● Social and economic reforms from 1789-1793 and 1795-1799 were incomplete until the Consulate, including local administration and fiscal system changes.
Examiner Report
Many candidates were able to produce high-quality responses, based on the deployment of appropriate factual evidence to aid the development of fully-focused and balanced arguments. Many responses comprised accounts (often in considerable detail) of Napoleon's various policies - a narrative/descriptive approach which often lacked explicit relevance to the requirements of the specific question. This was particularly evident in responses which drifted into outlines of Napoleon's foreign adventures.
My essay plan

Question 63
9389 Oct/Nov 2014 Paper 22

(a) Why were there dangers to the French Revolution from the counter-revolutionaries from 1789 to 1795? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The simplest answer is that counter-revolutionaries opposed the Revolution, but the reasons were varied. ● The Church and nobility, the main counter-revolutionary groups, had specific aims and resisted the Revolution from the beginning. ● The Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1790) was a turning point, sparking resistance from clergy and lay people. ● Provincial populations, feeling the Revolution was dominated by Parisians, resisted and used violence against it. ● The émigrés played a significant role in counter-revolutionary efforts, with monarchism linked to their actions. ● Under Robespierre's Jacobins, those not openly supportive of the Revolution were considered counter-revolutionary. ● Louis XVI, though key to the events, is not often labeled as a counter-revolutionary in secondary sources, but his role is still relevant.
Examiner Report
There were some very impressive responses to this question, based on clear understanding of the various groups which opposed the Revolution and the reasons for their opposition. Some candidates were able to explain how and why threats to the Revolution developed and changed over time in the period from 1789 to 1795. Some responses lacked such analytical depth and candidates found it difficult to focus on the required timeframe. Weaker responses were the result of a lack of clear understanding of the term 'counter-revolutionaries'
My essay plan

(b) Analyse the ways by which Napoleon was able to increase his authority over France as First Consul from 1799 to 1804. [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon's authority was established by the Constitution of 1799, where he became First Consul, surpassing the other consuls. ● He had the power to appoint ministers and officials, strengthening his control. ● Representative assemblies like the Tribunate and Legislature existed but were tightly controlled by Napoleon. ● Prefects were used to control the provinces, ensuring centralized authority. ● Plebiscites, while democratic in appearance, were carefully managed by Napoleon to maintain his power. ● Napoleon played a direct role in the Code's creation, setting the agenda and actively participating in the sessions. ● His control over censorship and the police system reinforced his authority. ● Propaganda, media supervision, and public works projects were used to bolster his image. ● His popular policies and stability contrasted with the chaos of the previous years since 1789. ● Some details of Napoleon’s policies might offer additional insight into his rule, providing good context but should not be overemphasized.
Examiner Report
As in responses to Part (a), some candidates struggled to confine their answers to the given timeframe, reference to Napoleon’s actions after becoming Emperor being relatively common. Most responses were based on narrative/descriptive accounts of Napoleon’s policies and would have benefited from more explicit reference to the impact which they had on his authority over France. The most impressive responses were characterised by analytical depth and remained fully-focused on the requirements of the question.
My essay plan

Question 64
9389 Oct/Nov 2014 Paper 23

(a) Why did the Jacobins gain power in 1793? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The main aim of the Jacobins was to save the Revolution, especially in 1792 when France faced foreign threats and internal instability. ● France's army was weak, and counter-revolutionaries were strong in some regions. ● Revolutionary factions were divided, but the Jacobins built support in provinces and among Parisian sans-culottes. ● Their simple program focused on protecting the Revolution, especially from internal enemies. ● They saw the King as the primary enemy, viewing him as a traitor due to his dealings with foreign powers, especially after the Flight to Varennes. ● The Jacobin Terror followed, bringing short-term support due to their decisive actions. ● Economic policies, such as maximum prices and paper money (assignats), were introduced to tackle inflation. ● Radical measures, like Dechristianisation, reflected how the Jacobins used extremism to suppress moderate alternatives, not their initial reason for gaining power.
Examiner Report
This was a highly popular question, and most candidates were able to identify and explain at least some of the factors which enabled the Jacobins to gain power in France. The most effective responses were characterised by detailed analysis of a wide range of issues, with a particular focus on the significance of 1793. Other responses tended to be rather more generalised, while the weakest drifted into accounts of what the Jacobins did once they had gained power, which lacked relevance.
My essay plan

(b) Which social group benefited more by 1804 from the changes introduced by Napoleon: the middle class or the peasantry? [20]

Markscheme Points
● The middle class gained the most during the Revolution and Napoleon's rule, with property rights guaranteed during moderate reforms (1789-1792), the Directory, and the Consulate. ● The fiscal system reforms reduced many grievances of the ancien régime, benefiting the middle class and peasantry, but urban and rural poor gained little. ● The middle class was not threatened by the Jacobins. ● Although conditions in towns did not improve, the middle class was involved in administration, especially under Napoleon. ● Napoleon's economic policies, such as encouraging trade, were intended to appeal to the middle class, though the Continental System harmed merchant interests by restricting free trade. ● Legal changes provided some security, benefiting the middle class, and education was theoretically expanded to all children, but in practice, it mainly served the middle class. ● Women were affected by the Consulate, as it reversed some earlier gains for women.
Examiner Report
Candidates generally were able to demonstrate sound knowledge of the policies carried out by Napoleon in the role of First Consul prior to declaring himself Emperor in 1804. The most impressive responses went beyond a basic narrative account of these policies to analyse their impact on the French middle class and peasantry, enabling the development of balanced and fullyfocused arguments. A small number of candidates, while able to explain the benefits and disadvantages which the peasantry derived from Napoleon’s changes, found it more difficult to provide the same level of analysis regarding the middle class; there appeared to be some confusion over who the middle class actually were. Weaker responses were characterised by unsupported assertions, chronological confusion and a tendency to drift into coverage of Napoleon’s foreign adventures, which lacked relevance.
My essay plan

Question 65
9389 May/June 2014 Paper 21

(a) Why was Louis XVI executed in 1793? [10]

Markscheme Points
● In 1789, few desired a republic; the King mishandled the situation. ● Reluctant concessions: August Decrees, Declaration of Rights. ● Opened to extreme reactionaries, including Marie Antoinette and courtiers. ● Growing dissatisfaction from Parisians led to his move from Versailles to Paris. ● Radicalism grew, and Jacobins demanded the King's death. ● War and internal rebellion intensified tensions. ● King's escape attempt at Varennes (1791) fueled suspicions of treason. ● Perception of the King supporting foreign intervention solidified his image as a traitor.
Examiner Report
Many candidates wrote generally about the causes of the French Revolution and, in particular, reasons for the growing dissatisfaction with Louis XVI's rule. As a result, most responses did not go beyond 1789 and were based on the inaccurate assumption that there was widespread support for the King's execution at that time. More effective responses focused on the key events of the post-1789 period, such as growing radicalism, the rise of the Jacobins and the significance of Louis XVI's flight to Varennes. This enabled a more focused explanation of why the king was executed in 1793, rather than earlier.
My essay plan

(b) How complete was Napoleon's power over France by 1804? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Napoleon was popular, unaffected by high taxes, censorship, and a high death toll. ● His mix of liberty and authority was popular, with prosperity attained. ● Seen as a better alternative to post-1793 turmoil. ● Appeared to combine aspects of the Ancien Régime with revolutionary benefits. ● No viable alternative; loyal prefects. ● Concordat pacified the Church, reducing potential dissent. ● Civil Code reflected key revolutionary gains. ● Created an elite loyal to the regime, avoided extreme treatment of royalists and radicals. ● Amiens treaty boosted support. ● Referendum on Life Consulship showed support, but raised questions about dictatorship. ● France's tradition of autocratic rule made his position secure, as long as stability, liberty, and equality were maintained. ● Foreign policy success was key to maintaining popularity.
Examiner Report
There were a number of impressive responses to this question. These were characterised by detailed and balanced assessment of Napoleon's control over France by 1804, leading to a focused judgement fully supported by appropriate and accurate factual evidence. Other responses were less balanced; there appeared to be a general assumption that Napoleon's power must have been complete once he adopted the title of Emperor, most candidates finding it difficult to identify any factors to challenge this assumption. Less successful responses would have been improved by greater factual knowledge or chronological accuracy. Some candidates wrote at length about issues relating to the period after 1804.
My essay plan

Question 66
9389 May/June 2014 Paper 22

(a) Why were there economic problems in France from 1789 to 1795? [10]

Markscheme Points
● Successive wars, including the Seven Years' War and aid to America, drained the treasury. ● Fiscal system was inefficient, reliant on tax farmers. ● Tax burden fell mainly on the Third Estate (middle and lower classes). ● Higher estates resisted tax increases. ● Estates General (1789) failed to resolve issues. ● Louis XVI lacked firm action; political structures disintegrated. ● Officials unable to collect taxes, and no incentive to lend to the government. ● Inflation worsened, decreasing treasury income. ● War from 1792 worsened economic problems. ● Jacobin policies sought to control economic 'crimes.' ● Introduction of Assignats (paper money) worsened inflation.
Examiner Report
Virtually all candidates were able to outline the economic problems facing France in 1789, together with an explanation, in varying levels of depth and accuracy, of the reasons behind them. Relatively few were able to go beyond these long-term factors to explain why France continued to experience economic problems throughout the period from 1789 to 1795. Therefore, a number of responses lacked specific focus on the timeframe established in the question.
My essay plan

(b) Did the Jacobins do more to defend or endanger the Revolution in France? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Jacobins helped save the Revolution by suppressing internal and external threats, including counter-revolutionaries. ● Vendée and other regions were hostile, influenced by monarchism and Catholicism. ● By 1795, threats were curtailed through harsh methods, and external dangers were largely neutralized. ● Jacobins were divisive, with neutrality offering no protection from prosecution. ● The Terror saw widespread executions, undermining support. ● De-Christianisation by Robespierre alienated many, especially Catholics. ● Robespierre's dictatorial approach contradicted revolutionary ideals, leading to growing unpopularity. ● By 1795, Jacobins were seen as a danger to the Revolution, representing despotism. ● Conclusion: While they contributed to saving the Revolution from immediate threats, their methods and dictatorial nature ultimately made them unpopular and divisive, threatening the Revolution in the long term.
Examiner Report
Some candidates were able to develop focused, balanced and well-supported arguments based on detailed factual knowledge and understanding. Other responses were restricted to narrative accounts of the 'reign of terror', inevitably leading to the conclusion that the Jacobins endangered the revolution by going against the basic principles which it represented. Some candidates would have benefited from a greater understanding of who the Jacobins were or what they actually did.
My essay plan

Question 67
9389 May/June 2014 Paper 23

(a) Why did the Directory face problems in France from 1795 to 1799? [10]

Markscheme Points
● The Directory came to power after years of instability and little achievement. ● Treasury was empty, and paper currency was worthless. ● Gained power due to unpopularity of other political groups, especially the Jacobins. ● Tried policies like forced loans on the wealthy but were unpopular. ● Local administration fell apart. ● Main support came from the army, but the war went poorly until Napoleon's successes. ● Napoleon's military victories strengthened his position more than the Directors. ● The Directory was accused of corruption, though this was likely exaggerated. ● Efforts to introduce reforms were seen as authoritarian. ● Eventually, the Directory fell in the coup of Brumaire in 1799, replaced by Napoleon's consulate.
Examiner Report
There were relatively few responses to this question. Some contained generalised statements regarding political and economic instability, but needed to back this up with specific supporting evidence. Weaker responses were characterised by confusion regarding what the Directory actually was, why it was established and the problems with which it was confronted
My essay plan

(b) How far do you agree that war was the most important cause of the instability of French governments from 1789 to 1795? [20]

Markscheme Points
● Louis XVI's government was under pressure from 1789 due to financial problems. ● Loss of political control after failure of Estates General and increasing violence (e.g., Bastille attack, Grand Peur). ● Louis' position weakened by disorder spreading from Paris to provinces. ● Successive institutions like the Constituent Assembly diminished Louis' power. ● Instability worsened by reactionaries in provinces and threats from foreign enemies. ● Inflation worsened, taxes were unpaid, and loans had high interest rates. ● Foreign wars, especially after Flight to Varennes (1791), destabilized France further. ● Radical groups in Paris gained strength after 1791, leading to the rise of the Jacobins in 1793. ● The Jacobin regime, led by Robespierre, used terror to bring temporary stability. ● Further extremism, like the Law of Prairial, undermined Rule by Law, leading to the Law of Necessity. ● By 1795, foreign threats were reduced, but finance issues persisted. ● Robespierre and his party became isolated and were overthrown, replaced by the more moderate Directory. ● Despite changing governments, many of the problems from 1789 (e.g., lack of a representative government, financial issues) persisted in 1795.
Examiner Report
There were relatively few responses to this question. While some candidates were able to develop focused and balanced arguments, others adopted a narrative/descriptive account of the various wars in which France was involved during the period, with only implicit reference to the requirements of the question. Other factors which led to political instability in France could have been more often considered.
My essay plan

Notes